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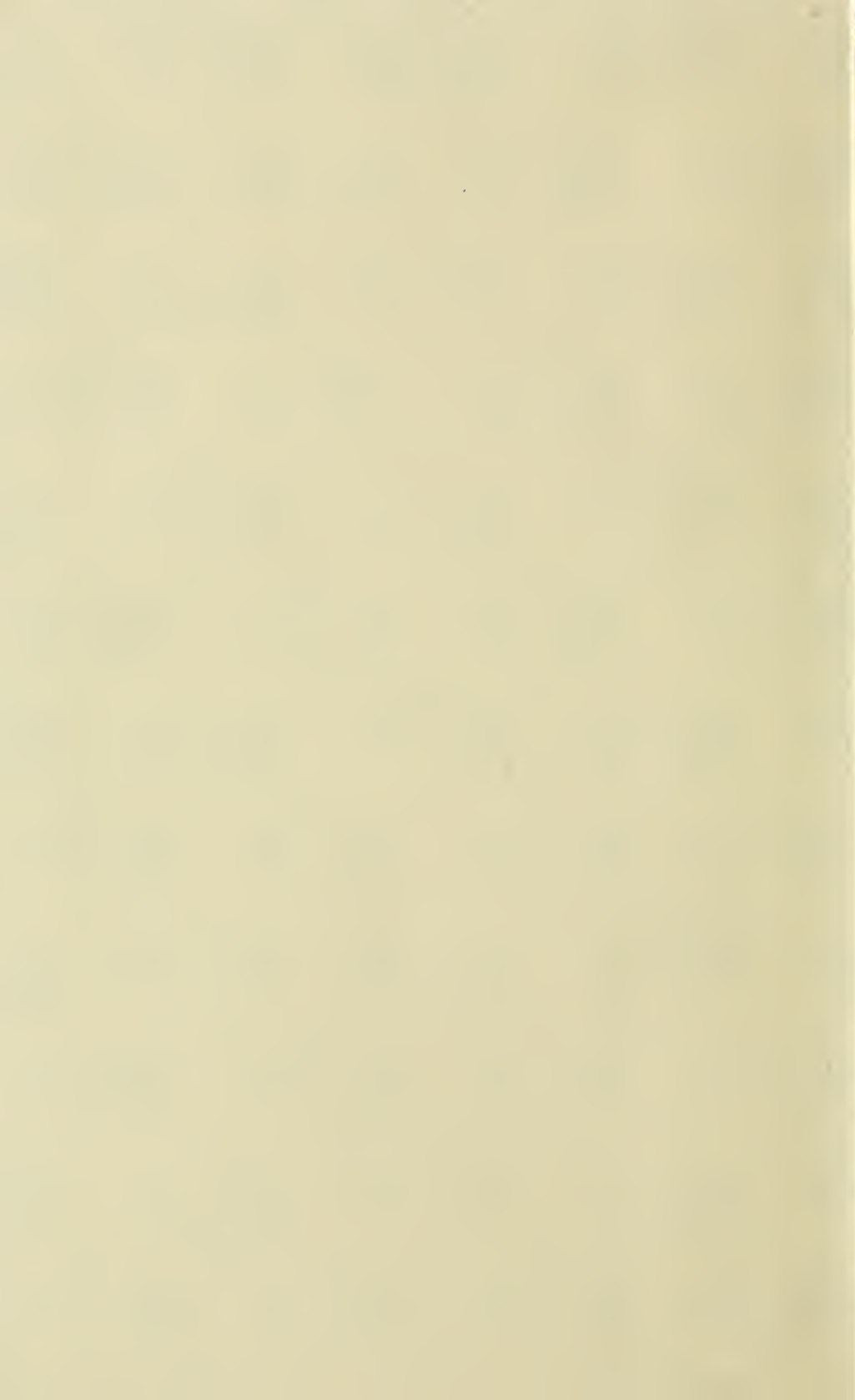


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Edward Young's "Conjectures on  
Original Composition" in  
England and Germany

BY

MARTIN WILLIAM STEINKE, PH.D.

*Americana Germanica*

NUMBER 28

G. E. STECHERT & CO., INC.  
NEW YORK  
1917



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# Americana Germanica

MONOGRAPHS DEVOTED TO THE COMPARATIVE  
STUDY OF THE

Literary, Linguistic and Other Cultural Relations  
of Germany and America

EDITOR

MARION DEXTER LEARNED

University of Pennsylvania

*(See List at the End of the Book)*



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## INTRODUCTION

This new edition of Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition*, prefaced with an essay on them, will prove to be at least in good season. It is the first handy separate reproduction of them. The reprint in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, however excellent, is too much out of sight and out of reach of the average student and the general reader, and the editions of Young's works which contain the treatise have become very rare. The treatise is, furthermore, a significant literary document. It is an important, inspiring, and instructive piece of eighteenth century literary criticism, a representative product of its times as well as one of the two best works of its author, and it is, finally, an object of strange neglect on the part of students of English and of critics as much as it is an object of attention and speculation on the part of the German literary historians. A new edition of this remarkable and neglected essay will therefore not only be in place, but may also contribute to a more intense study of comparative literature and æsthetics.

The present edition of the *Conjectures on Original Composition* is an accurate reprint of the first edition of 1759, and the changes made by their author in the second edition, printed in the same year, are carefully added in footnotes. Punctuation and spelling, however, have been modernized, following the example of John Doran in his edition of Young's works, because many a sentence punctuated according to the old way says something different from the meaning it assumes when interpreted according to the present method of punctuation. For an almost facsimile reproduction of the treatise the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 16-42, may be consulted.

The introductory essay on the *Coniectures on Original Composition* attempts first to ascertain their origin, original meaning, and rôle in English literature. It deals with the history of their contents, with the terminology and principal ideas, and with their fundamental points of view. Finally it discusses their significance to the English reader and writer, past and present.

The essay next outlines the relation of the *Conjectures on Original Composition* to German literature. It deals particularly with their

✓ relation to the so-called *Storm and Stress Period*, attempting first to show where and to what extent and effect the ideas contained in Young's treatise occur in the works of the *Storm and Stress* writers, and then to ascertain whether these writers got their ideas from Young's treatise or from other sources. It offers, in other words, a reconsideration of the important question whether Young's essay and English thought in general really exerted the dominating influence upon the rise of the *Storm and Stress Period* with which they are often accredited.

Professor J. Goebel, who suggested this study, and Professor O. E. Lessing are being remembered gratefully for their kind assistance and encouragement.

M. S.

## CHAPTER I

### YOUNG'S "CONJECTURES" IN ENGLAND

In the year 1759 there was published in London an anonymous literary epistle entitled *Conjectures on Original Composition in a Letter to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison*. It was written by Edward Young (1683-1765), who is best known as the author of the *Night Thoughts*. It sought the attention of the public by virtue of appearing in the form of an open letter to Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), well known in his day as a London printer and still better known, both then and today, as the great novelist. In its first printed form it comprised a book in rather large type and, consequently, of one hundred and eleven pages. Near the end of this pamphlet the reader will find a reprint of the earliest edition of Young's *Conjectures*, as the treatise hereafter will be called for short, and at the bottom of the pages he will find the changes with which the treatise soon appeared in a second edition.

We shall approach a detailed study of the *Conjectures* by way of several preliminaries necessary for a right understanding of the treatise. We shall give our attention first to the author.

Leaving a detailed study of his literary career until later, we shall observe now only in general who the writer of the *Conjectures* was. Edward Young (1683-1765) was the son of the rector of Upham, England. Concerning his career as a student his biographers say that he rose very slowly and that his good standing rested more on the reputation of his father than on any merit of his own. They report, on the other hand, that he became a brilliant talker and that he proved able to cope in argument with the noted deist Tindal. He was graduated as B. C. L. at the age of thirty-one, and as D. C. L. at the age of thirty-six. Then he set out on a literary career in London, being admitted to Addison's circle. His earliest products were epistles and poems dedicated with "fulsome flattery" to various persons of influence with the purpose of finding a Maecenas or obtaining a good political or ecclesiastical post for the author. Consequently all biographical accounts of him bristle with unpleasant epithets of himself and his writings, such as preferment-hunter, flatterer, mixture of bombast and platitude, too rhetorical, too much antithesis, insincere, absurd. In knack for satire and epigram he was, however, the closest rival of Pope. His series of seven satires, which he collected finally under the title *Love of Fame, the Universal*

*Passion*, met with such approval and reward on the part of the various persons to whom they were dedicated that the author reaped a fortune from them.

Young figured also as a dramatist. The first of three tragedies which he produced was played only nine evenings and was then ridiculed, among other recent plays, by Fielding, in his *Tom Thumb*. Another drama of Young's, however, enjoyed a long popularity. His fame as an author is, nevertheless, not founded on the works so far mentioned; it rests on his *Night Thoughts* (1742-45). The last, although obviously imitative of *Paradise Lost*, *The Seasons*, and the *Essay on Man*, has been translated into seven foreign languages. Its success is said to have been enormous, and it can still be read with interest.

Prior to the production of the *Night Thoughts*, when near the age of fifty, Young took holy orders. After being chaplain to the King for some time thereafter, he was given the rectory of Welwyn, near London, in the service of which he passed the remainder of his life. When in his seventy-sixth year, and as the last of his more ambitious literary endeavors, he gave to the world his *Conjectures on Original Composition*.

Concerning their publication we find, in the first place, that two editions of them were printed in the year 1759. The first edition, which is generally said to have appeared in May, was announced and quoted in the May number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and in the same words in the May issue of *Scot's Magazine*. These advertisements seem, though, to have preceded the printed edition and must have been based on the manuscript. According to a letter from the publisher to the author on May 29th, the first edition was not yet off the press on this date.<sup>1</sup>

In this letter the printer speaks not only of having "written urgently" so as not to "balk the sale," but he also requests the author to shorten what he has said about Addison's death and to put it at the end of the treatise. From this letter we learn also that the *Conjectures* were probably altered between May 29 and their publication to this effect. With these data, on one side, and with the assertions of various historians on the other, all upholding the opinion that the *Conjectures* were written this early, it follows that their first edition appeared sometime in June. And the second edition with certain changes, which are given in footnotes in the present reprint, followed after a few months, in 1759.

We want to know also just when the *Conjectures* were composed. The letter from Richardson to Young which has just been quoted dis-

<sup>1</sup> Richardson, *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 55.

closes furthermore that Dr. Johnson was somehow concerned with them. From this fact Professor Brandl concludes that they may have been evoked by Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas*, which had been published about two months earlier and which in the tenth chapter likewise speaks of literary originality versus imitation.<sup>2</sup> If that were the case, they would have been written sometime during April or May, in 1759. The following passage from a letter by Richardson to Mrs. Delany on September 11, 1758, shows, however, that the *Conjectures* date farther back, either in manuscript or at least in plan: "Dr. Young . . . will one day oblige the world with a small piece on original writing and writers."<sup>3</sup>

By way of further preliminary we may consider also the intricate problem as to what evoked the *Conjectures*. The earliest answer is Warton's assertion that they were written in reply to Pope's declaration that nothing remains to the moderns but to recommend their productions by the imitation of the ancients.<sup>4</sup> Later factors, and therefore more probable causes of the *Conjectures*, are Joseph Warton's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (1756), which was dedicated to Young and seems to have been used by him, and a certain anonymous *Letter to Mr. Mason on the Marks of Imitation*, which appeared in 1757.<sup>5</sup> That Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas* was the principal incentive to the writing of the *Conjectures*, as Professor Brandl concludes, seems improbable in view of the letter to which I have already referred. This letter written September 11, 1758, or six months before *Rasselas* appeared, shows that the *Conjectures* were at least already planned, if not already written, at that time.<sup>6</sup> Young himself tells us that he wrote his *Conjectures* in reply to an inquiry by a friend of his. In the introduction to them he says to Richardson, "You remember that your worthy patron and our common friend put some questions on the serious drama at the same time when he desired our sentiments on original composition," and adds that he will now "hazard some conjectures" on these subjects. This statement, which does not show who the "worthy patron and common friend" was, permits of various interpretations. According to Professor Brandl it refers to Colley Cibber (1671-1751).<sup>7</sup> The latter enjoyed the company and intimate friendship of Young, particularly in 1745, on account

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Richardson, *Correspondence*, Vol. IV, p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Elwin, *Works of Pope*, Vol. I, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Richardson, *Correspondence*, Vol. IV, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 12.

of their "relation in their dramatic capacity."<sup>8</sup> In a letter written to Richardson in 1754 Young speaks, moreover, of a Mr. Cibber and the stage.<sup>9</sup> At about this time Richardson and Colley Cibber were also writing to each other,<sup>10</sup> all of which are reasons for thinking that Colley Cibber might have been the "worthy patron and common friend" in question.

We have equally good reasons, on the other hand, for inquiring whether the person in question was not Theophilus Cibber (1703-1758), a successful London actor, playwright, and author, a son of the former Cibber. Between 1745 and 1758 he acted for several years at Covent Garden, then for some time at the Haymarket, and later again at Covent Garden. In 1753 he published a history of actors and actresses<sup>11</sup> and his *Lives of the Poets*, and in 1756 his *Dissertations on Theatrical Subjects*.<sup>12</sup> These works, besides being forerunners of the *Conjectures* as to time, were forerunners in some respects also as to content. Their author discusses subjects similar to those treated in the *Conjectures*. He writes against neglecting the heart and says that emotions must come from it. He speaks of men of genius, and of immortal Shakespeare as the great example. He discusses Shakespeare's strong and lively imagination, his spirit and fire, emphasizes the imagination as the poet's principal working faculty, speaking of creations of the poet's imagination, and declares, "Nothing evinces want of genius, invention, or taste, more than an awkward imitation." In view of such similarity as to thought between these two men, not to mention the strong probability that they were intimate associates, it seems probable that Theophilus Cibber may have been the person of whom Young speaks as having given him occasion to write the *Conjectures*.

It seems possible also that Aaron Hill (1685-1750) may have been that person. He wrote many letters to actors concerning their art, addressed literary disquisitions to Pope and Bolingbroke, and he is the author of a treatise entitled *Critical Reflexions on Propriety in Writing*. Since he had such an interest in literary criticism and since he and Young belonged to the same literary circle, Hill may have been the person

<sup>8</sup> Doran, *Works of Young*, Vol. I, p. XIV.

<sup>9</sup> Richardson, *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> Same, Vol. II, p. 177.

<sup>11</sup> Theophilus Cibber, *The Lives and Characters of the Most Eminent Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and Ireland*.

<sup>12</sup> *Dissertations on Theatrical Subjects as they have several times been delivered to the Public*, by Theophilus Cibber.

who evoked the *Conjectures*. It may be noted also that Walter Thomas declares, without, however, verifying his statement, that it was "without doubt" Arthur Onslow.<sup>13</sup>

In view of these conflicting statements and in view also of similar instances in Young's works, which will be pointed out later, it seems even possible that the statement in question was made merely as a polite pretext for writing the *Conjectures*.

We shall now survey the literary career of Young before and during the time he wrote the *Conjectures*. It will be a necessary preparation for a detailed consideration of them. In many instances the *Conjectures* cannot be understood as they were meant, if interpreted without reference to their author. By referring in ambiguous cases to his point of view and his way of thinking and expressing himself as revealed in his other writings and in the history of his life, we may be able to find the original meaning and the only correct interpretation of any passage in question.

Young commenced his long literary career preceding the *Conjectures* with half a dozen epistles of literary, political, and personal contents, addressed to various prospective patrons. Besides being a conventional type of literature of the time, they concern rather traditional subjects and are executed in the conventional manner. They are written in polished heroic couplets and abound in witty turns, clever analogies, antitheses, paradoxes, and bombastic exaggerations. They are, in other words, products of the time and school of Pope. Two of them, the *Epistles to Mr. Pope Concerning the Authors of the Age* (1730), are particularly remarkable as such. In these Young expounds, praises, and embraces the neo-classical creed and lauds Pope and Addison for establishing it. In the first he speaks as a fellow-combatant in the pseudo-classical ranks, opposing the extravagances of the Marini, or so-called "Metaphysical," school and demanding conformity to the currents of French influence which were constituting essentially the neo-classical movement. He insists particularly on rational and clearly expressed contents and polished verse form. In the second epistle, particularly, he interprets in detail and indorses with praise what are altogether Pope's "precepts how to write and how to live."

A further product of Young's neo-classical period are his satires, collected later under the title "*Love of Fame, the Universal Passion*." In them he proved himself a worthy rival of his master Pope. Here belongs also his *Centaur not Fabulous, in Six Letters to a Friend on the*

<sup>13</sup> *Le Poète Edward Young*, pp. 469 f.

*Life in Vogue*. It is a didactic, moralizing, non-original discourse, written in the spirit and manner of the moral weeklies of that time. The same thing is true of his *Reflexions on the Public Situation of the Kingdom*, except that this poem is written in blank verse. His three tragedies, finally, are in most respects also characteristic of his neo-classic period. *Busiris* (1719) is composed according to artificial rules of criticism, such as those of the school of Corneille and Voltaire, and resembles in this respect Addison's *Cato* and similar works of that period. The same facts are true about *The Brothers*, a play also belonging to this period of his literary career, although not published until 1753. *The Revenge* (1721), however, while sharing many of the neo-classic characteristics of the other two plays, is in some respects Shakespearean. It is a variation upon the theme of *Othello*, and its language resembles in some instances that of Shakespeare. We see here the beginning of Young's participation in the Shakespearean movement, of which he became later a most ardent promoter.

Passing over various small and insignificant writings we come now to the five of his twenty-five works which are, at least in certain respects, distinctly something more than neo-classic. *The Last Day* (1713) is a neo-classic poem as to verse form and diction, but as to contents it is Biblical, and was found to be an imitation of Milton.<sup>14</sup> It came in the wake of the devoted studies and ardent recommendations of Milton by Dennis, Addison's *Spectator* papers on Milton, and Toulson's edition of Milton's poetical works, and identifies Young with the Miltonic revival. His *Paraphrase on a Part of the Book of Job* (1719) belongs likewise to the Miltonic variety of sacred poetry. Although it is neo-classic as to its polished heroic couplets and as to its purpose of presenting the *Book of Job* in a form "more suitable to our notions of regularity," it shows how the author developed his Miltonic or Biblical style, of which he speaks later as original and creative composition. He indicates, in footnotes to the poem, how he studied the style of the Bible, speaking of the *Book of Job* as the noblest and most ancient poem in the world, commenting on the sublimity and beautiful imagery of various passages in the *Old Testament*, and deducing principles of effective description.

This development of a new literary style, wholly different from the neo-classic, was continued by Young in a *Vindication of Providence, or a True Estimate of Human Life* (1728), which is a treatise in prose developed from one of his sermons. After many critical observations and infer-

<sup>14</sup> Hettner, *Geschichte der engl. Literatur des 18ten Jhd.*, p. 489.



ences, some of which we shall discuss later, he states that he endeavors to show in a way yet unattempted that the genius and eloquence of the psalms, Prophets, and Job are superior to those of all other writings, that he wants to raise the "estimation of these compositions as compositions," and adds that some parts of them have "reached such a height of perfection that human nature has not ideas to carry her to a conception of anything beyond it." He says, on the other hand, that there is "not something beyond all human composition in this," and with Milton as his model and with Longinus, whom he quotes particularly in the *Last Day*, as his classical authority, we see him acquire the Scriptural and Miltonic style of composition. In his *Night Thoughts*, finally, the most successful English rival of *Paradise Lost*, we find his new art of composition at its best. This poem contains in practice to a large extent those principles of literary composition which are preached in the *Conjectures*.

This survey of Young's works written prior to the *Conjectures* shows the different phases and distinctive periods in his literary career. He was first a thorough and successful neo-classicist. Then he developed into a leader of the Miltonic revival, which was one of the principal phases of the Romantic Movement in England. He participated also in the Shakespearean movement of the time, as dramatist and in the *Conjectures*, which was another phase of the English Romantic Movement. He seems to speak, finally, as a follower of a third phase of this movement, that is, of the Spenserian Revival, when he talks in the *Conjectures* about the fairyland of fancy in which genius may wander wild. Spenser was at this time looked back to as being "all imagination and exaggeration; the poet of dreamland, of fairy and supernatural life,"<sup>15</sup> and this reawakened interest in the poet showed itself in particular emphasis on the fancy, or imagination, as the poetic faculty. As an author Young is, in other words, a versatile and vacillating follower of the trends and vogues of his time. His works, particularly the *Conjectures*, can therefore be rightly understood only with reference to their author and the external circumstances of their origin.

Let us examine here also the extent and nature of Young's reading by noting briefly what writers he mentions, quotes, or discusses, in his various works. By scanning all his works in regard to this question I find that he touches upon twenty contemporary English writers. Of these he mentions and quotes most frequently Addison, Pope, Richardson,

<sup>15</sup> Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, p. 47.

and Swift, besides being personally acquainted with them. He associated intimately also with Colley Cibber, Tickell, Thomson, and Walpole, although he refers but rarely to them in his writings. Of the older English authors he deals most with Bacon, Milton, and Shakespeare. Of modern foreign literatures he takes notice only of that of the Romance languages. He mentions Boileau, Cervantes, Rabelais, Thuanus, and Voltaire, although each but once or twice. The Bible, particularly the *Old Testament*, he uses in a literary way more frequently than any other book. In the ancient Latin authors, furthermore, he was thoroughly steeped. He introduces no less than twenty in his various writings and quotes some of them up to forty times. He quotes also from one to three times from each of a dozen Greek authors. Although Young surely read hundreds of books, particularly English works, which he does not mention in his writings, our foregoing data show that he was primarily a literary classicist.

The next problem in this connection will naturally be to determine the relation of the *Conjectures* to other works. Their author declares that they are an original production. In their second edition he inserted the statement that he was writing on a topic on which he had never seen anything written before. This statement seems, however, to have been made only to make a favorable impression on the readers. Some years ago Professor Brandl found instances in which the *Conjectures* are not without precedent.<sup>16</sup> Following his example I continued the investigation until finding earlier parallel passages for all important statements in the *Conjectures*. These prototypes have or may have served as sources or models, either consciously or unconsciously, and thus weaken Young's claim of originality. The evidence for this will be found in Appendix I.

The erroneous idea of some recent literary historians that the *Conjectures* are notably independent as to origin, has a parallel in the opinion that they have a profound, original meaning. Young's various works are conventional, as we have seen, conforming in type, subject matter, and treatment to the precedents of this or that literary school. His literary criticism, wherever we find it in his works, is likewise conventional. The *Conjectures*, in particular, are conventional, and to be understood rightly they must be read with reference to the time and circumstances which produced them. Not only their theme, arguments, and terminology have prototypes in sources that were in vogue in

<sup>16</sup> *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 1-11.

Young's time, but their fundamental points of view are also traceable to the various currents of thought, or literary schools, with which Young identified himself at various times in his career.

The literary schools in which not only his poetic productions but also his literary criticism are rooted are the Neo-classic and the Romantic. He began his career as a critic, even his campaign in the interest of originality, which culminated in the *Conjectures*, as one of the Neo-classicists. The latter stand for opposition to the preceding "Metaphysical," or Italian school, which they condemned for the extravagances of its literary forms and language and particularly for its dull practice of imitation and consequent lack of sense, of wit, or French esprit. In comparison with the preceding Italian school the French school of Pope stood, furthermore, as strongly for originality as did the Romantic in comparison with that of Pope. In the *Dunciad* and in the introduction to his *Homer* Pope himself is about as forceful a preacher of originality as Young. It was in the school of Pope that Young acquired his first principles of literary criticism, and while he later repudiated many of these, he retains some of them even in the *Conjectures*. For the most part, however, particularly in the *Conjectures*, these neo-classic principles had to give place to the principles of other literary schools. Instead of exalting the ancients over the moderns, as Pope did all his life, Young became a defender of the moderns. As soon as the Romantic Movement became established, he identified himself with the various phases of it, with the Miltonic revival, the Shakespearean movement and the Spenserian revival. It is principally this Romantic Movement of which the *Conjectures* are a product. Of these various currents of thought during Young's days we must take cognizance to understand the *Coniectures* rightly.

Let us trace them briefly. Milton is spoken of several times in the *Conjectures*, although only in the arguments about the relative merits of the modern and the ancient writers. It is only surprising that the Miltonic revival, in which Young had participated so thoroughly before, as we have seen, and which had already become so general, does not play a bigger rôle in the *Conjectures*. The Shakespearean movement, which had also become very strong and widespread by this time, is felt more distinctly in the *Conjectures*. Shakespeare, like Milton, is discussed in them principally as a modern man of genius who is not only equal but even superior to the ancients. We have less obvious but, nevertheless, unmistakable traces of the Spenserian revival in the *Coniectures*. It would be strange if none of this movement were apparent,

for it had already assumed large proportions and is said to have been more important in English Romanticism than the Shakespearean and Miltonic movements.<sup>17</sup> "Spenser was the poet of Romanticism as Pope was of Classicism. They stand exactly in opposition; the one all intellect, didactic and satirical; the poet of town life and fashionable society; the other all imagination and exaggeration; the poet of dream-land, of woods and streams, of fairy and supernatural life."<sup>18</sup> We have traces of Spenser and particularly of various commentators on Spenser in the *Conjectures* where Young speaks of the fairyland of fancy where genius may wander wild, where it has a creative power and may reign arbitrarily over its own empire of chimeras, ranging unconfined in the wide field of nature, making what discoveries it can, sporting with its infinite objects uncontrolled, and painting them as wantonly as it will. Further signs of Spenser's influence are certain references to magic, such for example, as these: "A genius differs from a good understanding as a magician from a good architect; that raises his structure by means invisible; this by the skillful use of the common tools. Our spirits rouse at an original; that is a perfect stranger, and all throng to learn what news from a foreign land. And though it comes, like an Indian prince, adorned with feathers only, having little of weight.—If an original, by being as excellent as new, adds admiration to surprise, then are we at the writer's mercy; on the strong wing of his imagination we are snatched from Britain to Italy, from climate to climate, from pleasure to pleasure; we have no home, no thought, of our own; till the magician drops his pen." These passages are written in the spirit and the language of the Spenserians.

In approaching the principal issues in the *Conjectures* we come first to Young's discussions of literary originality. He speaks here partly like a Neo-classicist combatting the imitation and dullness of the preceding Italian school, but mostly as a defender of the modern authors against the ancients; that is, as a champion of independent, original attempts instead of translation and imitation of the old classical writers. Speaking sometimes of original authors and sometimes of original works, he showers much flowery but vague praise on them, such as the following: "Originals are the fairest flowers of a mind of genius"; "originals are great favorites, for they are great benefactors"; "a translation differs from an original as the moon differs from the sun"; "originals shine like comets." Contrary to our natural expectation, however, he does not define origin-

<sup>17</sup> Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> Same.

ality directly, saying: "I shall not enter into the curious inquiry of what is, or is not, strictly speaking, original, content with what all must allow, that some compositions are more so than others." We have to gather, therefore, from scattered and more or less indirect statements what he really says about originality.

As one of the latest participants in the debate over the ancients and the moderns, he denounces and forbids translations and imitations of the ancient works. "Let us build our compositions with the spirit and in the taste of the ancients," he says, "but not with their materials." Then he gives a direct rule for achieving originality and excellence, saying in substance: Imitate the ancient authors, but imitate aright. He that imitates the *Iliad* does not imitate Homer, but he who takes the same method which Homer took, which is the method of writing without using any other works as models. Imitate not the composition, but the man.

It is not by any particular sordid theft, Young says further, that we can be the better for the ancients, but we can learn from them independence in thinking and composing, and, he adds, we have their beauties as stars to guide us, and their faults as rocks to be shunned. He also says the ancients are forever our revered masters in composition when masters are needed, but some of the moderns are natural born writers and do not need teachers and models. Thus he permits of literary rules only as crutches which are a "needful aid to the lame, but an impediment to the strong." "By the bounty of nature," he says also, "we are as strong as our predecessors," and, "we ought to exert more than we do, and, on exertion, our probability of success is greater than we conceive." Young's entire discussion of originality, in short, consists in arguments against translations and imitation, and for independence in thinking and writing, and this whole argument is developed by him, and his many predecessors along this line, out of the long and general debate over the ancients and the moderns.

The next great issue in the *Conjectures* is the discussion of genius. Young's most direct explanation of genius reads as follows: "What, for the most part, mean we by genius but the power of accomplishing great things without the means generally reputed necessary to that end? A genius differs from a good understanding as a magician from a good architect; that raises his structure by means invisible; this by the skillful use of common tools.—In the fairyland of fancy genius may wander wild; there it has a creative power and may reign arbitrarily over its own empire of chimeras. The wide field of nature also lies open before it,

where it may range unconfined, make what discoveries it can, and sport with its infinite objects uncontrolled, as far as visible nature extends, painting them as wantonly as it will." What he is speaking of here is what he calls in the preceding paragraph original, unindebted energy of mind, or strong poetic imagination. That he is not speaking of genius as supernatural is shown in the remainder of the statement, in which he adds that the most unbounded and exalted genius can give us only what by his own or other's eyes has been seen, though that infinitely compounded, raised, burlesqued, dishonored, or adorned. He speaks likewise of the imagination working in the realm of fancy where he says "so boundless are the bold excursions of the human mind that in the vast void beyond real existence it can call forth shadowy beings and unknown worlds, as numerous, as bright, and perhaps as lasting, as the stars; such quite original beauties we may call paraisaical," and he calls these possibilities "an ample area for renowned adventure in original attempts."

In various cases, indeed, the *Conjectures* speak of divine genius and divine poetic inspiration, which has given rise to various speculations as to a remote religious or theosophic origin and a deep, mystic meaning in the *Conjectures*. In regard to learning and natural genius they say, "the first informs, the second inspires, for genius is from heaven, learning from man; learning is borrowed knowledge; genius is knowledge innate and quite our own." Of "true poetry" they say in a similar way, "real, though unexampled, excellence is its only aim; nor looks it for any inspiration less than divine." In these passages, which are the most direct ones about a divine nature of genius and poetic inspiration, we find, however, that the term divine is used only in a figurative way to denote excellent, and that it is not used in a religious or philosophical sense. It is used here only as it is applied elsewhere in speaking of the *divine Iliad*, of Homer as a *divine author*, and of the *dawn of divine genius* with Homer and Demosthenes. Divine inspiration of secular poetry is even directly repudiated, and denouncing the "fable of poetic inspiration," Young says, "a poet of a strong imagination, and stronger vanity, at the mere compliment of the world, might think himself truly inspired, for enthusiasts of all kinds do no less." All further statements of Young to the effect that genius partakes of something divine are only quotations or allusions to this effect, and mostly ancient quotations or allusions. It was due to this language, however, that Young's friends spoke of his "next to divine vehemence with which original writing is recommended."

Young not alone deprecates supernatural inspiration of the literary genius, as pointed out before, but his whole religion, philosophy, and literary criticism, as found throughout his works, are contrary to a mystic conception of a divinely inspired poetic genius. His conception of God and man is not mystic, but rationalistic, as may be pointed out briefly. The great Father, he says, kindled at one flame the world of rationals; one spirit poured on spirits' awful fountain; poured Himself through all their souls, and if they continue rational, as made, resorbs them all into Himself again.<sup>19</sup> . . . The Deity is all reason in his nature, conduct, and commands. The great, invariable, eternal alternative throughout his creation is reason or ruin.<sup>20</sup> The soul of man, he continues, is a native of the skies and an illustrious stranger in this foreign land, all pervading, all-conscious, a particle of energy divine.<sup>21</sup> Finally he exclaims: "O for a joy from reason, joy from that which makes man a man."<sup>22</sup>

In a similar way he says, there is nothing mysterious in the Gospel but things we cannot understand because of the limitations of our intellect.<sup>23</sup> "A mystery explained," he declares, "is a mystery destroyed: for what is a mystery but a thing not known?"<sup>24</sup> He says even, "faith is entirely the result of reason."<sup>25</sup>

This philosophy is the contrary of mysticism. It corresponds rather with the doctrines of Aristotle, and Young may have gotten it from his thorough study of the works of Thomas Aquinas, which are essentially commentaries on the teaching of Aristotle.

Young maintained this same rationalism in his literary criticism. Thought, reflection, he says, make poetry:

"Think frequently, think close, read nature, turn  
Men's manners o'er, and half your volumes burn.  
To nurse with quick reflexion, be your strife,  
Thoughts born from present objects, warm from life:  
When most unsought, such inspirations rise,  
Slighted by fools and cherished by the wise.  
Expect peculiar fame from these alone;  
These make an author, these are all your own."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Doran, *Works of Young*, Vol. I, p. 59.

<sup>20</sup> Same, Vol. II, p. 453.

<sup>21</sup> Same, Vol. I, pp. 77 and 136.

<sup>22</sup> Same, Vol. I, p. 183.

<sup>23</sup> Same, Vol. II, p. 434.

<sup>24</sup> Same, Vol. II, p. 430.

<sup>25</sup> Same, Vol. II, p. 422.

<sup>26</sup> Same, Vol. II, p. 43.

What wealth in intellect, that sovereign power,  
 Commanding with omnipotence of thought  
 Creations new in fancy's field to rise!"<sup>27</sup>

In all compositions, says Young further, judgment should bear the supreme sway, and a beautiful imagination, as its mistress, should be subdued to its dominion.<sup>28</sup> Such views, moreover, are voiced not only in his earliest works, but also in the *Conjectures*. He speaks in the latter of genius as "exquisite edge of thought" and "intellectual light and heat," and questions "whether genius is more evident in the sublime flights and beauteous flowers of poetry or in the profound penetrations, and marvelously keen and minute distinctions called the thorns of the school." He says also, a noble author thinks and composes, and not merely reads and writes; the epic poet thinks, the tragedian feels; and, finally, a genius implies the rays of the mind concentrated and determined to some particular point. These statements and the various restrictions as to "divine genius," including the repudiation of divine inspiration and culminating in the assertion that the greatest genius can give us "only what by his own or others eyes has been seen" reveal that the *Conjectures* give likewise a rationalistic interpretation of literary originality and genius.

These observations will suffice to show that the *Conjectures* were developed in a conventional manner within the field of literary criticism, and that they are not a prodigious, original creation, as their author wanted to make it seem by his introductory statement. Our observations will suffice also to show that the *Conjectures* have not been developed out of the field of religion or theosophy and that they have no extraordinary mystic meaning, as some critics believe that they have. They constitute, nevertheless, a significant document. As we have seen in tracing their relation to Young's own career and to the works of other critics, they form a very comprehensive and advanced literary program of the time.

Yet, even with their important contents and their forceful language, they did not attain to much significance in their own country. There the contents of the essay seems to have been too largely common property, as topics of discussion in literary circles as well as subjects of other writers. Young's lack of prestige as a literary critic must also have been unfavorable to the success of his last and greatest contribution to literary criticism. It will be seen later that he was appreciated far more in

<sup>27</sup> Doran, *Works of Young*, Vol. I, p. 105.

<sup>28</sup> Same, Vol. I, p. 416.



Germany, where we find Kant, Hamann, and Herder among his admirers.

The *Conjectures* were immediately announced and copiously quoted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and in *Scot's Magazine*. Goldsmith discussed them also in his *Critical Review*, but without passing definite judgment on them. Dr. Warburton, finally, commended them, but corrected them to the effect that "the character of an original writer is not confined to subject, but extends to manner."<sup>29</sup> Horace Walpole, however, and William Shenstone are said to have greeted them with unrestricted applause.

Very little influence of the treatise on later English writers can be discovered. Professor Brandl states that his search for instances revealed but few.<sup>30</sup> He found, however, that Horace Walpole in the second preface to his *Castle of Otronto* (1765) speaks quite unmistakably in the spirit and the words of the *Conjectures*. William Shenstone, furthermore, writes to his friend Dr. Percy: "You must by all means read Dr. Young's new 'Conjectures on Original Composition' and let it deter you, when you have completed Ovid, from engaging in any more translation."<sup>31</sup> But no further instances of this kind have so far been discovered.

The *Conjectures* were similarly disregarded by the English literary critics. This has also been pointed out by Professor Brandl. Home seems to be entirely independent of Young in his *Elements of Criticism* (1762). Elizabeth Montagu, a personal friend of the author, disregarded his *Conjectures* when she wrote her *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare* (1765) and followed Dr. Johnson's introduction to his edition of Shakespeare's works (1765). Hugh Blair follows Addison devotedly in his *Lectures on Rhetoric* (1783), but criticises Young as "too fond of antithesis—too much glitter—fatiguing." Young's biographer Croft speaks of the *Conjectures* as "the lively letter in prose . . . more like the production of untamed, unbridled youth than of jaded fourscore."

From the time of their appearance until now the *Conjectures* have not received as much attention from the English reader as their form and contents deserve. They are unfortunately omitted from many editions of Young's works and are becoming very rare. They are contained only in the editions of 1767 (posthumous supplementary volume), of

<sup>29</sup> Richardson, *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 56.

<sup>30</sup> *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Walter Thomas, *Le Poète Edward Young*, p. 476.

1770 (Edinburgh, 4 vols.), of 1774 (London, 5 vols.), of 1778 (Isaac Reed, 6 vols.), of 1798 (London, 3 vols.), and of 1854 (John Doran, 2 vols.). These editions have become so scarce that it required a search of two years both here and abroad to procure one.

The fate of the *Conjectures* in English literature is hardly deserved, and they are worth rescuing from such oblivion. They are not only interesting to read, but also form a valuable historical document. To the student of English literature they prove a revelation as to the period of their composition as well as to their author's literary career. While they embody to a large extent the literary program of their time, they are also their author's most complete expression as to literature and literary composition, constituting his literary testament to posterity.

## CHAPTER II

### YOUNG'S "CONJECTURES" IN GERMANY

Very soon after the *Conjectures* had come off the press in England they became known also in Germany. They appeared there in three translations, they were brought to the notice of the public through several reviews, favorable as well as adverse, and they were discussed among the writers and reckoned with by the literary critics. In this way they soon attained greater eminence in Germany than they ever enjoyed in their own country.

The first German translation of the *Conjectures* appeared towards the end of February, in 1760, or about nine months after the publication of the first English edition. It was signed "V. T." and was made by Hans Ernst von Teubern. He made his translation from the second English edition and had it printed in Leipzig. In the introduction the translator speaks of Young in terms of the highest praise. In this same year, 1760, a second translation of the *Conjectures* made its appearance. This one was signed "G." But the signature proved a mystery, and who the author was, is still unknown. It was a translation of the first English edition, and was published in Hamburg, in the form of a contribution to the *Freymüthige Briefe über die neuesten Werke aus den Wissenschaften in und ausser Deutschland*. In the year 1761 the *Conjectures* went forth anew from Leipzig in the form of an unaltered reprint of Teubern's translation. Finally there appeared, nearly two decades later, in the year 1787, a third and entirely new translation. It was published also in Leipzig, from which city Teubern's two editions had gone forth. The translator signed it only "C", and as such he still remains unknown. He used the first English edition and produced a rather free rendering. In the introduction he states that he received some help with his task, but does not say from whom. In the preface he adds that he considers his translation of Young's essay the first one in Germany, having failed to find mention of any other, and that he hopes, if there is one and it had been forgotten, his work would reawaken Young's spirit among the Germans.

These various translations indicate how favorably Young's essay was received in Germany. The first ones particularly show that it met with immediate and high esteem. That Teubern had his translation before the public within but a few months after the essay was written, and his second edition within a year of the first, and that the *Freymüthige Briefe*

offered the essay to their readers in a special translation, is strong evidence of ardent and spreading interest. The latest translation, though, is of more restricted significance. In the first place, it came when the wave of such theorizing was almost spent. It came, moreover, from a translator who was clearly not a leading critic. He states erroneously that the *Conjectures* had been published over thirty years before. Although the greatest German writers of the century had already done some of their most promising work, and the country was intoxicated with enthusiasm over its literary ability and success, he nevertheless says in the preface to his translation that no previous decade had been so void of original writers as his, and that German letters were suffering from the bane of much imitation, slavery to literary rules, and the mercenary interests of the writers. The preface bears witness, however, to unbounded enthusiasm on the part of its author for Young as an original genius and for his *Conjectures* as a guide to literary success.

We come next to the several literary reviews of the *Conjectures*. The earliest one appeared in the *Neue Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* of Leipzig on February 25, 1760. It consisted of a synopsis, favorable comment, and the announcement that a German translation (meaning Teubern's) was soon to appear. Shortly after this translation was published it was reviewed by Gottsched in his periodical *Das Neueste aus der Anmuthigen Gelehrsamkeit*. As was to be expected of such a classicist, he accuses Young of meddling with matters of which he was not competent to speak, and deplors that Teubern did not translate something more worthy of his talents. He adds, however, that Young's style in particular and also some of his ideas were good, and that the translation was a creditable piece of work. In the same year the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* reviews the treatise favorably and gives a long synopsis of it. Then it mentions the two German translations, and closes with the remark that the treatise was already too well known in Germany to require further comment. On June 25, 1761, Nicolai reviewed the *Conjectures* in the *Literaturbriefe* with much praise, and censured severely Gottsched's criticism of them. In the same year the *Bremisches Magazin* published a translation of the article on the *Conjectures* which had appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* two years before. In 1762 the *Göttingische Anzeiger von gelehrten Sachen* reviewed the second edition of Teubern's translation, praising both the original and the translation. An article appearing in the *Beiträge zur Literatur und zum Vergnügen* in the year 1766, finally, discusses the literary excellence of Greece and

England and also mentions the *Coniectures* favorably and quotes from them.

Schmid's *Theorie der Poesie*, published in 1767, further recommends the *Conjectures* highly as a literary guide to immortal originality. Rambach, on the other hand, undertook a refutation of them in a *Schulprogramm* in 1765. He was answered by Herder with a strong defence of Young in the form of a review in the *Königsbergische gelehrte und politische Zeitung*. The *Gelehrter Mercurius* likewise attacks the *Conjectures* for discrediting the ancients. Meusel's article *De veterum poetarum interpretatione* of 1767, finally, carries this attack still farther. Cramer's *Nordischer Aufseher*, again, printed an eleven-page synopsis of the *Conjectures* in 1770 and makes favorable comments on them. Thereafter mention was made of the *Conjectures* in various bibliographies and critical treatises. A further review of them appeared as late as 1791 in the supplement to the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, criticising the translation of 1787, but praising Teubern's translation and the English original. And even as late as 1794 the *Englische Blätter*, published by Schubart, contained an article which cites with approval a passage from the *Conjectures*.

These data show that the essay received prompt and wide attention. The reason for this favorable reception is a matter for further inquiry. Was it that the essay brought new and stirring ideas to Germany? If so, it must have been one of the principal agents which evoked the discussion and subsequent cult of literary genius and originality which prevailed for several decades, during the so-called Storm and Stress period in German literature. Or did the essay achieve its popularity in Germany because it treated so forcefully certain subject-matter that was already familiar from other sources, but was just becoming a burning question of the day? The answer to these questions will be found by a careful study of the rôle which the *Conjectures* played in contemporary German literature.

The Germans not only translated, praised, and criticised Young's "lively letter" on literature and literary composition, as we have just observed; they also studied, applied, and quoted it, as we shall now see. We find, in fact, that almost everything it contains of vital literary criticism occurs in some form or manner in the literature of Germany during the next two decades. Let us ascertain as far as possible to what extent this was due to the influence of Young's treatise.

Various critics have concluded that the treatise exerted a profound and decisive influence on German literature. Stein says that it did much towards establishing in Germany the conception of the poet as a creator,<sup>1</sup> the very idea which constitutes the soul of the Storm and Stress movement. Walter Thomas, in his thorough treatise on the life and works of Young, likewise asserts that the *Conjectures* were of great consequence in Germany, and particularly for the literary revolution which followed upon them.<sup>2</sup> More recently still Professor Kind, in his excellent monograph on Young, has argued that they established their doctrine of individuality and original genius in Germany as the watchword of a new literary school.<sup>3</sup> Lastly we are told by Dr. Rudolph Unger that the *Conjectures* gave Germany a conception of genius that became a revolutionizing factor in her literature.<sup>4</sup>

While at the first glance the reasoning of these critics seems altogether plausible, the question remains whether their conclusions are not based too exclusively on the fact that the ideas in question later became so general and effective in Germany, particularly during the "Genieperiode." It will be in place, therefore, to inquire into the definite evidence for the assumption that Young's critique became so influential in Germany. To be sure there are instances which show unmistakable traces of the effect of the critique upon German literature. Thus Hamann admired and quoted not only Young's *Night Thoughts* but also his *Conjectures*. In one passage he mentions the latter and again alludes to them indirectly when treating of literary imitation, of genuine and deep feeling as a requisite of the poet, and of Young's advice to the author: "Know thyself!"<sup>5</sup> In another place he mentions them again and uses two expressions from them, "the noble few," and "the latest edition of the human soul."<sup>6</sup> Finally, in a third passage he says: "In his codicil to Richardson Young sets the task to imitate the ancients in such a manner that we get, the farther the better, away from similarity to them."<sup>7</sup> These three passages are as far as I can see the only ones in which we can be certain that he was making use of the *Conjectures*. To believe, however, that the latter permeated his thinking to the extent of excluding other similar influences as well as his own independent

<sup>1</sup> *Die Entstehung der neueren Ästhetik*, pp. 136 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Poète Edward Young*, pp. 513 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Edward Young in Germany*, Chapter II.

<sup>4</sup> *Hamann und die Aufklärung*, pp. 275 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Hamann*, Vol. II, p. 198.

<sup>6</sup> *Same*, Vol. II, pp. 265 f.

<sup>7</sup> *Same*, Vol. II, p. 173.

thinking on these topics, and that they were the cause of all resemblance to them in his later writings, would seem too credulous. He quotes not only Young's treatise, but also several similar writings, and even before his acquaintance with the former he wrote along lines of literary criticism in about the same manner as he did afterwards.

The principal worshipper at the shrine of the *Conjectures* was perhaps Herder. He read them early in life and copied passages from them into his notebook.<sup>8</sup> In the year 1766 he wrote the review of Rambach's *Schulprogramm*, which already has been mentioned. This review comprised about two pages in book form, in which Herder quotes, defends, and praises the *Conjectures*, speaking of "the great Young" and of "a genius like Young," although he bickers somewhat about their attitude towards the ancients.<sup>9</sup> In the following year he adds: "Why do we feel a certain ardor in Young's treatise on originals which we do not notice in merely thorough disquisitions? Because Young's spirit prevails in it, speaks to us, as it were, from heart to heart, from genius to genius, and transmits itself like an electric spark."<sup>10</sup> A little later in the same year he refers to the *Conjectures* in a discussion of imitation versus emulation. He reverts also to refutations of them, such as that by Rambach, and repeats once more his dissatisfaction with Young's assertion that the reading of the ancients is mostly harmful.<sup>11</sup> Even after the "Genieperiode" he quotes Young's maxim that one often resembles the ancients most when seeming to depart farthest from them.<sup>12</sup>

This is the extent and limit of our certain evidence of Herder's tribute and indebtedness to the *Conjectures*. This evidence proves indeed that he reckoned seriously with them, but it does not prove that his work as author and critic was greatly influenced by them. While it is true that he culled from them for his notebook and praised, defended, and quoted them, it is equally certain that other critiques also occupied and influenced him. He mentions and quotes many. It was, for instance, only two weeks before writing the defence against Rambach that he speaks in a similar review of Meyer's *Briefe zur Bildung des Geschmacks* of finding here and there in the introduction to it unnamed extracts from Joseph Warton's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*.<sup>13</sup> It follows that

<sup>8</sup> Haym, *Herder nach seinem Leben und Werken*, Vol. I, p. 149.

<sup>9</sup> Herder, Vol. I, pp. 121-123.

<sup>10</sup> Same, Vol. I, p. 256.

<sup>11</sup> Same, Vol. I, p. 383.

<sup>12</sup> Same, Vol. XII, p. 235.

<sup>13</sup> Herder, Vol. I, p. 115.

Herder was very familiar with this essay also, which resembled Young's as to contents and surpassed it in being more consistent, thorough, and convincing.

The other cases where influence of the *Conjectures* on German literature can be verified are rather few and less important. The *Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe* refer to their warning against servile imitation.<sup>14</sup> Schlapp tells of similarities and references to them in Lindner's *Lehrbuch der schönen Wissenschaften* (1767).<sup>15</sup> He asserts also that Winkelmann and Sulzer are "obviously dependent on Young's *Conjectures*." This assertion is, however, a mere theory. We have reached the limit of our certain evidence in the matter.

In many cases more or less influence of the *Conjectures* seems obvious until one considers that there were many other possible sources of the same sort of influence. To avoid deceiving ourselves in such cases we must bear in mind that a number of critiques quite similar to Young's were read simultaneously in Germany and that as much could be said for the influence of one or the other of these treatise on German literature as has been said about Young's critique. Many of these treatises were also reviewed in periodicals, translated, quoted, and applied, but we have neither time nor room at present to go further into their history in Germany. We leave, moreover, for a later chapter the passages which resemble in some way the *Conjectures*, but whose origin cannot be traced either to them or to this or that other source. We shall review next some cases where the ideas expressed in the *Conjectures* appeared previously in Germany, as well as others where such ideas were afterwards taken from other sources, though they could have been taken from the *Conjectures*.

We begin with a consideration of Young's most definite statements about ancient versus modern authors. He says, "Let it not be suspected that I would weakly insinuate anything in favor of the moderns, as compared with ancient authors; no, I am lamenting their great inferiority. But I think it is no necessary inferiority;<sup>16</sup> . . . The modern powers are equal to those before them; modern performance in general is deplorably short. . . . Reasons there are why talents may not *appear*, none why they may not *exist*, as much in one period as in another."<sup>17</sup> Such passages, and several more of this kind could be added, identify Young's

<sup>14</sup> Page 86.

<sup>15</sup> Schlapp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 61.

<sup>16</sup> *Conjectures*, in this monograph, p. 47.

<sup>17</sup> Same, p. 55.



essay, however, as one of the later links of a long chain of disquisitions about the relation and relative greatness of the ancient and modern authors. But this *querelle des anciens et modernes*, which was begun in France by Perrault and was inaugurated in England by Sir William Temple, spread to Germany partly from France and partly from England. It was fought violently in Germany as early as the year 1740, which marks the beginning of the strife with Gottsched as the advocate of French pseudo-classic literature and literary principles on one side, and Bodmer, Breitinger, and Lessing on the other side as the champions of the more modern authors as exemplified especially in Milton and Shakespeare. So this dispute, which continued in Germany during the twenty years preceding the *Conjectures* and for twenty more after their appearance, cannot have been influenced much by them. In the year 1753, for example, Lessing writes, "One praises the later, the other the ancient authors, but nature remains ever the same, always rich in gifts, and there is never a lack of minds which leave the common confines of knowledge, filled with creative thoughts. Was wisdom the glory only of bygone times? Does the human mind no more possess the greatness of the ancients?"<sup>18</sup> And similar circumstances prevailed as to Young's statement that the world admires in the ancients, "not the fewness of their faults, but the number and brightness of their beauties," and that "a giant loses nothing of his size though he should chance to trip in his race." The former idea was frequent in earlier French aesthetics, as Stein says,<sup>19</sup> and Lessing expresses the latter in very similar terms in the year 1750,<sup>20</sup> and again in 1752.<sup>21</sup>

As to the relative value of translations and original works Young and Lessing have also about the same to say. As a champion of the modern authors and original works, Young makes an attack on Pope, who had asserted nothing better remains for the moderns to do than to follow the ancients, and says in regard to his translation of Homer that an original attempt would have been more to his credit and adds, "But supposing Pope's Iliad to have been perfect in its kind: yet it is a translation still, which differs as much from the original as the moon from the sun."<sup>22</sup> But Lessing asked as early as 1753 whether any one with the least national ambition would condescend to be a translator, if he could become an original writer.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Vol. I, p. 243.

<sup>19</sup> *Entstehung der neueren Ästhetik*, p. 19.

<sup>20</sup> Vol. VIII, p. 262.

<sup>21</sup> Vol. V, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 59.

<sup>23</sup> Vol. V, p. 169.

What the *Conjectures* say about imitation was already being widely discussed in Germany when they were published. "Imitations are of two kinds," they say, "one of nature, and one of authors; the first we call originals, and confine the term imitation to the second."<sup>24</sup> This idea had been expressed particularly by Batteux in 1746,<sup>25</sup> and by Gellert in 1751.<sup>26</sup>

The following lines in the *Conjectures* also did not bring a new conception to Germany: "Born originals, how does it come to pass that we die copies? That meddling ape imitation, as soon as we come to years of indiscretion (so let me speak) snatches the pen and blots out nature's mark of separation."<sup>27</sup> That every man is by nature an original, differing from every other individual, and that he ought to follow this law of nature and ought to make his literary productions originals, and not imitations, had been taught long before by Vida in his "Art of Poetry,"<sup>28</sup> a treatise which was well known to the German literary critics. And the expressions to *imitate*, *ape*, and *mimic nature* are common in Blackwell's *Life and Writings of Homer*, and in the earlier works of Winkelmann. The idea and expression of mimicking nature, says Stein,<sup>29</sup> go back to Aristotle.

Young adds as to imitation that "copies surpass not their originals, as streams rise not higher than their spring, and even rarely so high."<sup>30</sup> Several years before, however, Gellert said: "Whoever does not rely on himself for anything, but on his original for everything, whoever will do nothing in imitating but meagerly to follow his example, he will not only equal it, but will also always remain beneath it. And what would have been achieved by imitating if none had ever attained to more than the original which he followed?"<sup>31</sup> And Gellert quotes this from Quintilian. So we have here two earlier and widely known sources from which later repetitions of the ideas in question may have originated.

The "Conjectures" also speak of the imitator as a transplanter.<sup>32</sup> This idea became frequent and forceful in Germany. But Lessing voices

<sup>24</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe*, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Vol. I, p. 306.

<sup>27</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup> *English Poets*, Vol. XIX, p. 645.

<sup>29</sup> *Entstehung der neueren Ästhetik*, p. 125.

<sup>30</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 53.

<sup>31</sup> Vol. I, p. 65.

<sup>32</sup> p. 45.

it as early as 1753.<sup>33</sup> Then they differentiate between imitating the writings of an author, on the one hand, and his method of writing on the other. This had already been done a few years before by Winkelmann.<sup>34</sup> And they advocate as the right method the practice of Homer, who, they say,<sup>35</sup> wrote only according to nature. This doctrine had been taught long ago, however, by Vida in his "Art of Poetry."<sup>36</sup> From him Opitz took it over into his *Buch von der deutschen Poeterei*, and from there Bodmer quotes it and develops it.<sup>37</sup> Somewhat later, but still previously to the *Conjectures*, Lessing takes it up and propounds it most fully and strikingly. But even Gottsched had asserted in his *Kritische Dichtung* of 1740 that an imitation of nature must form the basis of poetry, and Breitinger said in the same year in his *Kritische Abhandlung*: "Poetry is a skillful imitation of nature. . . . Study nature and follow its suggestions!"<sup>38</sup> Still further sources for the doctrine in question are given by Lessing, who says:<sup>39</sup> "Not only Batteux, but also Horace and Aristotle say: 'Imitate nature.'" And even eight years after the publication of the *Conjectures* this same author quotes Diderot, saying: "What do I care for rules, if I am only being pleased?—And is there any rule except that to imitate nature?"<sup>40</sup>

One of Young's most striking arguments is that for new thought and imaginative invention versus translation, imitation, and plagiarism. He says of the imitator that he "thinks in wretched unanimity with the throng: incumbered with the notions of others, and impoverished by their abundance, he conceives not the least embryo of new thought; opens not the least vista through the gloom of ordinary writers into the bright walks of rare imagination and singular design; while the true genius is crossing all public roads into fresh, untrodden grounds."<sup>41</sup> But this argument also was common in Germany when Young's essay arrived. For evidence of this the earlier works of Lessing may be consulted.<sup>42</sup> And many other German and still more foreign sources were available.

<sup>33</sup> Vol. V, p. 276.

<sup>34</sup> Vol. I, pp. 206 f.

<sup>35</sup> p. 48.

<sup>36</sup> *English Poets*, Vol. XIX, p. 643.

<sup>37</sup> *Deutsche Literaturdenkmale*, Vol. XII, p. 65.

<sup>38</sup> p. 198.

<sup>39</sup> Vol. V, p. 387.

<sup>40</sup> Vol. X, p. 142.

<sup>41</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 57.

<sup>42</sup> Vol. IV, pp. 399, 407; Vol. V, pp. 7, 198; Vol. VI, p. 60; Vol. VII, pp. 27, 110.

After differentiating thus between the imitator and the "true genius" Young speaks of the "difference between those two luminaries in literature, the well-accomplished scholar and the divinely-inspired enthusiast."<sup>43</sup> By "the well-accomplished scholar" he means the author who gets his ideas by reading and writes mechanically according to literary rules, and he inveighs severely against such book-learning and artificial writing. He says very tersely: "Rules, like crutches, are a needful aid to the lame, though an impediment to the strong."<sup>44</sup> This, however, was again nothing new to the Germans. Shortly before the appearance of the *Conjectures* Hamann had applied the very term "crutches" to mechanical literary rules and methods,<sup>45</sup> while Young's leading German forerunner in the campaign against servile literary rules proved to be Lessing.<sup>46</sup> Even immediately before the days of the *Conjectures*, to give a further instance, he quotes from Dryden concerning "servile observation of the dramatic unities."<sup>47</sup> And Opitz argues in his *Buch von der deutschen Poeterey*<sup>48</sup> that literary rules and laws alone do not make the poet. Referring likewise to authorship based on book-learning and literary rules, Young adds: "Learning is fond and proud of what has cost it much pains; it is a great lover of rules, and boaster of famed examples, and sets rigid bounds to that liberty to which genius often owes its supreme glory."<sup>49</sup> This old contention, however, that literary rules are more detrimental than helpful to the literary genius, was inaugurated in Germany decades before the days of the *Conjectures*. It was started there primarily by Bodmer and Breitinger in their fight against the pseudo-classicism of Gottsched. Even previously to that it played an important part in the quarrel over the ancients versus the moderns, in which it centered largely around the distinction made between the genuine poet (*ποιητής*) as a maker, or creator, and the *versificateur*, a distinction which was formulated in the Renaissance, by such men as Petrarch, Ronsard, and Sir William Sidney, and which played also an important part in the 18th century, with such men as Addison, Shaftesbury, Warton, Diderot, and in Germany particularly with Lessing. The creative power of the imagination was recognized as the distin-

<sup>43</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 57.

<sup>44</sup> p. 50.

<sup>45</sup> Vol. I, p. 118.

<sup>46</sup> Vol. I, p. 253; Vol VI, p. 405; and Vol. VIII, p. 143.

<sup>47</sup> Vol VI, p. 285.

<sup>48</sup> p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 49.

guishing characteristic of the poet.<sup>50</sup> So Lessing quotes directly from Diderot in 1759 as to the "difference between a *versificateur* and a true poet,"<sup>51</sup> and also before that he distinguishes sharply between the *versificateur* and the genuine poet.<sup>52</sup> Lessing further remarks on the subject of the *versificateur* as a poet who works only with second-hand thoughts and rimes them according to mechanical rules. He adds that a genius will rarely follow rules intentionally, and that he must not be checked by them.<sup>53</sup> He even declares positively that his attitude towards rules is such that he would rather have made the most shapeless human being than the most regular statue,<sup>54</sup> and states that the English consider close observance of literary rules slavery,<sup>55</sup> and adds that only amateurs are subject to rules of poetry.<sup>56</sup> We have also a still earlier discussion by this critic as to the origin, nature, and danger of rules.<sup>57</sup> Gellert, his teacher, speaks in similar manner against rules.<sup>58</sup>

Young continues this line of thought by adding: "For unprescribed beauties and unexampled excellence, which are characteristics of genius, lie without the pale of learning's authorities and laws."<sup>59</sup> But also for this passage there were in Germany not only many foreign but also many native forerunners. The most explicit forerunner among the Germans was again Lessing. As early as 1749 he speaks of "beautiful mistakes in the strides of a giant who will not condescend to follow cautiously in the footsteps of children."<sup>60</sup> Another such forerunner is Gellert. He quotes and applies Pope's statement in the *Essay on Criticism* that genius may gloriously offend and thus rise to faults which no true critic may attack, and that, in his brave disorder, he may "snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."<sup>61</sup> Thus he anticipates the above mentioned passage in the *Conjectures* completely, and does so by eight years; moreover both he and Lessing, the two leaders in the campaign against literary servility, repeated these views frequently in later years.

<sup>50</sup> Schlapp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 168.

<sup>61</sup> Lessing, Vol. VIII, p. 230.

<sup>52</sup> Same, Vol. VIII, p. 140.

<sup>53</sup> Vol. VII, p. 416.

<sup>54</sup> Vol. VII, p. 68.

<sup>55</sup> Vol. V, p. 405.

<sup>56</sup> Vol. V, p. 110.

<sup>57</sup> Vol. IV, p. 413.

<sup>58</sup> Vol. I, p. 105.

<sup>59</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 50.

<sup>60</sup> Vol. I, p. 253.

<sup>61</sup> Vol. I, p. 87.

A further thrust at hampering literary principles is Young's criticism of rime as "childish shackles and tinkling sounds," and his exaltation of blank verse.<sup>62</sup> But in 1751 and again in 1753 Lessing had spoken of others calling rime "childish tinkling," and by the time the *Conjectures* appeared he had already repeatedly criticised and discredited rime.<sup>63</sup> Blank verse was established in German literature lastingly and eminently by Klopstock long before the coming of Young's essay.

Set over against such attacks on translation, imitation, and servile dependence on precedents, the *Conjectures* contain various exaltations of literary "originals" and of the "true genius." Originals, they say, are great benefactors, extending the republic of letters and adding new provinces.<sup>64</sup> Now Lessing had already spoken of original writers as "extenders" (*Erweiterer*) several years earlier.<sup>65</sup> The term "original," also, applied both to writers and to writings, was not introduced or established in Germany by the *Conjectures*. It was overwhelmingly frequent in the multitude of French and English essays which were so widely read in Germany before and during the "Genieperiode." We also find leading German critics use the term just as Young does, and before his essay appeared. In 1754, for instance, Lessing uses the term "Originalstücke" for original literary productions,<sup>66</sup> and Winkelmann speaks at about this time of the independent genius as "ein Original."<sup>66</sup>

In further distinction between the laborious author and the true genius, the latter is spoken of as one who may boast of his no-learning, calling himself the eagle, for his flight above it, as Pindar did,<sup>67</sup> and one who, as Bacon, sees "with a more than eagle's eye."<sup>68</sup> In the year before that of the *Conjectures*, however, Lessing compares the flight of the poet to that of the eagle,<sup>69</sup> and Hamann speaks of the eyes having the keenness of the eagle.<sup>70</sup> As to the no-learning of the genius, the following sentence from the *Conjectures* may also be considered here: "Some are pupils of nature only, nor go farther to school."<sup>71</sup> But several years previously Lessing had said: "Whatever charms a peasant, cannot be

<sup>62</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 58.

<sup>63</sup> Vol. IV, p. 345; and Vol. VII, p. 32.

<sup>64</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 45.

<sup>65</sup> Vol. V, p. 418.

<sup>66</sup> Vol. I, pp. 22 f. and 224.

<sup>67</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 50.

<sup>68</sup> Same, p. 61.

<sup>69</sup> Vol. VII, p. 17.

<sup>70</sup> Vol. I, p. 80.

<sup>71</sup> p. 51.

degraded by a rule, for in him the impulse of nature is still genuine";<sup>72</sup> and of a certain writer he remarks that "an ardent and still modest imagination, the language of nature, gives him the right to a superior rank among our poets."<sup>73</sup>

As to the essential nature of genius Young says: In the fairyland of fancy genius has a creative power.<sup>74</sup> But this idea was not new to the Germans. Before Young, Winkelmann had spoken of the "hand of a creative master,"<sup>75</sup> and still earlier Lessing had spoken of a literary product "through which our country can defend the honor of possessing creative minds."<sup>76</sup> Batteux speaks very frequently of the creative power of the imagination, or fancy, as the essential characteristic of genius, and the essay<sup>77</sup> in which he does so, was read by all leading German critics and authors before and after the coming of the *Conjectures*. And Vida speaks in his still older and also commonly known *Art of Poetry*<sup>78</sup> of a "new creation" as a fit production of the poet since his name was derived from *ποιεῖν*, meaning to make, or create. Young adds in continuing on the matter of the creative power of the poetical imagination: "Moreover, so boundless are the bold excursions of the human mind that in the vast void beyond real existence it can call forth shadowy beings and unknown worlds as numerous, as bright, and perhaps as lasting, as the stars."<sup>79</sup> But with the philosophy of Leibnitz about "possible worlds" as their basis, Bodmer, Breitinger, and Baumgarten had already assigned to the poet as his special realm the "möglichen Welten" and the "Land der Möglichkeiten," which is pointed out very well by Schlapp<sup>80</sup> and by Franz Servaes.<sup>81</sup> And still others who had spread this doctrine in Germany prior to the *Conjectures* are Opitz, Batteux, and Lessing. The first of these says that all poetry consists in aping nature, and that it describes things, not so much as they are, but rather as they could or ought to be.<sup>82</sup> Batteux again says, "if this world is not sufficient to the poet, he creates new worlds, which he embellishes with

<sup>72</sup> Vol. I, p. 250.

<sup>73</sup> Vol. V, p. 159.

<sup>74</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 52.

<sup>75</sup> Vol. I, p. 230.

<sup>76</sup> Vol. IV, p. 302.

<sup>77</sup> *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe*.

<sup>78</sup> *English Poets*, Vol. XIX, p. 643.

<sup>79</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 61.

<sup>80</sup> *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 168.

<sup>81</sup> *Die Poetik Gottscheds und der Schweizer*, pp. 93 ff.

<sup>82</sup> *Buch von der deutschen Poeterei*, p. 13.

enchanted dwellings and populates with a million divers inhabitants."<sup>83</sup> In a similar way, also, Lessing speaks of the "creative mind" of the poet creating and animating "Möglichkeiten,"<sup>84</sup> meaning possible beings and circumstances. Thus we see that the theory in question was long and widely known in Germany before the time of the *Conjectures*.

Speaking also of the creative and life-giving power of the poetic genius, Young says of Shakespeare and Otway that they would have outdone Prometheus and given not only life, but immortality.<sup>85</sup> This Prometheus symbol, also, comparing the poet to Prometheus stealing divine poetic fire from heaven, or from the muses, or forming man out of clay and making him alive, does not owe its prevalence in Germany to the *Conjectures*. Vida uses it very strikingly in his *Art of Poetry*.<sup>86</sup> Winkelmann uses it most completely and very frequently prior to Young.<sup>87</sup> And Herder, who seems to use it the greatest number of times, got it from Shaftesbury, not from Young, as Walzel proves in his treatise "Das Prometheussymbol von Shaftesbury bis Goethe."

It is also to be noted that Young's foregoing high praise of Shakespeare is not the only instance of the kind in the treatise. In fact, he characterizes him repeatedly and most strikingly as a genius of the first rank among all writers since the days of the ancients. His glorification of him, being an effective summary of the arguments current during the Shakespearean revival in England, is so impressive that the question has been raised whether it inaugurated the great German Shakespearean movement in which would indeed have been an epoch-making influence of the *Conjectures* in Germany. But for two decades before their appearance Shakespeare had formed a central issue in German literary criticism. Such was the case in the strife between Gottsched and his opponents, and the latter, defeating Gottsched and his French pseudo-classicism, made a lasting place in Germany for Shakespeare and set him up firmly as the unparralleled example of the natural, original genius. The result was the extensive imitation and emulation of Shakespeare, making itself felt particularly during the "Genieperiode." Just how this German Shakespearean movement began and developed, is worked out very accurately by Koberstein in his essay "Shakespeares allmähliches Bekanntwerden in Deutschland." The fact is that the *Con-*

<sup>83</sup> *Les beaux arts*, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> Vol. I, p. 247.

<sup>85</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 67 f.

<sup>86</sup> *English Poets*, Vol. XIX, p. 638.

<sup>87</sup> Vol. I, pp. 56, 79, and 165 f.



jectures neither began nor greatly increased this movement, but that they were only one source of influence among many in this respect.

There is, however, a certain detail in Young's praise of Shakespeare which demands special consideration. Shakespeare is called "that much more than common man,"<sup>88</sup> which is an equivalent to the term super-man and to the German term "Übermensch." But this phrase in the *Conjectures* did not give rise to the super-man idea, as is plainly shown by Grimm's Wörterbuch in its discussion of the word "Genie." A few instances of evidence may also be added here to show that equivalents to Young's phrase "more than common man" were prevalent in Germany prior to the *Conjectures*. Vida, for example, speaks of an inspired poet singing in "more than human" sounds;<sup>89</sup> Lessing speaks of nature making a poet "something more than man,"<sup>90</sup> and Winkelmann uses the expression "the more than human circumstances."<sup>91</sup> So we have here three critics, all commonly known in Germany, who express the idea of "more than common man" before the *Conjectures* brought it in.

On the subject of genius Young further says, "A genius differs from a good understanding as a magician from a good architect."<sup>92</sup> But again several years earlier Lessing spoke of the "magic art of poetry,"<sup>93</sup> and of the "enchantment" which the genius of a writer lends.<sup>94</sup> Winkelmann also antedates Young by speaking of poetic magic.<sup>95</sup> And Batteux, a still earlier critic, discusses how a poet with a powerful imagination will create, populate, and also animate new worlds, and calls this "a sort of magic."<sup>96</sup>

Another poetic principle which played an important rôle in Germany and which was also said to owe its origin to Young's essay is the theory about the "language of the passions," or about the "feeling heart." The *Conjectures* speak about "an inestimable prize setting our passions on fire, thus strengthening every power that enables composition to shine";<sup>97</sup> and they say, "what comes from the writer's heart reaches ours," and continue in particular praise of Addison's "warm and feeling

<sup>88</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 64.

<sup>89</sup> *English Poets*, Vol. XIX, p. 643.

<sup>90</sup> Vol. I, p. 241.

<sup>91</sup> Vol. I, p. 21.

<sup>92</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 49.

<sup>93</sup> Vol. VII, p. 67.

<sup>94</sup> Vol. VI, p. 14.

<sup>95</sup> Vol. I, p. 91.

<sup>96</sup> *Les beaux arts*, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 62.

heart."<sup>98</sup> Thus Young argues in favor of the emotional powers versus the purely rational, and asserts repeatedly that the heart is of greater importance in poetic composition than the head. His statements in this matter have been taken for the cause of the emphasis laid by several German writers on the "language of the heart" and the "language of the passions," but such a reaction against rationalism in the field of literature was begun in Germany a long time prior to the *Conjectures*. Even in Vida's *Art of Poetry* the Germans read about the poet being "triumphant in his art when he sports with the passions and commands the heart,"<sup>99</sup> and Batteux gave them the term "language of the heart."<sup>100</sup> But the leaders of the movement in question were Bodmer, Breitinger, Gellert, and Lessing, and they carried it on in opposition to Gottsched and French pseudo-classicism, by vindicating Milton and Shakespeare to their countrymen, and by advocating English literary principles. But even before this movement was definitely inaugurated the earliest of these critics had expressed the theory that feeling and passion are important literary characteristics and factors, for the joint book by Bodmer and Breitinger on the imagination, which appeared in 1727, says: "Poetic enthusiasm is nothing other than the exceedingly strong passion for the subject matter with which the whole soul of an author is possessed and filled," and speaks of the imagination being inflamed by a strong passion.<sup>101</sup> These ideas were also frequently repeated by these two critics in their later and still more influential treatises, which appeared in and around 1740. Lessing wrote a detailed argument on this topic in 1749 in which he rates critical reason lower as a factor in composition than feeling,<sup>102</sup> and added later that a poet must himself have the feeling which he wants to produce in others.<sup>103</sup> Gellert also uses the term "language of the heart" repeatedly prior to Young's essay,<sup>104</sup> and praises an author for "letting his heart speak."<sup>105</sup>

Used much like the term "language of the heart" we find the term "language of nature," and as the former was contrasted with the term "voice of reason," so the latter was contrasted with the term "voice of rules." Lessing, for instance, identifies "feeling" and "language of

<sup>98</sup> *Conjectures*, pp. 65 f.

<sup>99</sup> *English Poets*, Vol. XIX, p. 640.

<sup>100</sup> *Les beaux arts*, p. 276.

<sup>101</sup> Servaes, *Die Poetik Gottscheds und der Schweizer*, pp. 62 f.

<sup>102</sup> Vol. I, p. 248.

<sup>103</sup> Vol. V, p. 283.

<sup>104</sup> Vol. I, p. 51, and Vol. II, p. 15.

<sup>105</sup> Vol. I, p. 41.

nature" strikingly and rates the "voice of nature" above the "voice of rules";<sup>106</sup> he also praises certain lines of poetry as "children of nature";<sup>107</sup> and to add another instance, he says, the best rule is to write without rules and have everywhere the "language of nature and of the heart."<sup>108</sup> The *Conjectures* indeed repeatedly urge the poet to follow nature, but they were preceded in this by the writers just quoted.

A further observation made by Young concerning authorship is that "virtue assists genius," and that "the writer will be more able when better is the man."<sup>109</sup> Long before this, however, Lessing says: "O muse, smile on him, that he may combine poetic fire and wisdom with nobility, or the poet and the good man,"<sup>110</sup> and elsewhere he says: "A man who thinks lowly, writes always weakly and poorly. . . . O virtue, teach me first how to live and then how to write. . . . Not knowledge, not wit, but the heart constitutes our worth."<sup>111</sup>

But in discussing the nature of true genius Young speaks not alone of nobility but even of divinity; he says, "Genius is from heaven, learning from man,"<sup>112</sup> and this is his way of saying that genius must be born, not made by learning. To a similar effect he quotes Seneca's line, "Sacer nobis inest deus" and adds: "With regard to the moral world, conscience, with regard to the intellectual, genius, is that God within. Genius can set us right in composition without the rules of the learned, as conscience sets us right in life without the laws of the land."<sup>113</sup> Now although Young did not mean much by saying genius is a god within, as is shown by his restriction that genius cannot give us divine truth revealed, and that it is not to set aside divine truth revealed, and that the most unbounded and exalted genius can give us only what by his own or other's eyes has been seen,<sup>114</sup> one could nevertheless expect that this restriction was not always taken into account and that the striking assertion about genius being "a god within" meant more to the reader than the author meant by it. If so, the reader might have understood the author to be speaking figuratively of poetic inspiration by the muses, or of a *Daimonion* in the terms of Socrates, or of inspiration in the terms of Plato;

<sup>106</sup> Vol. VI, pp. 42 and 190.

<sup>107</sup> Vol. V, p. 180.

<sup>108</sup> Vol. II, p. 228.

<sup>109</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 62.

<sup>110</sup> Vol. I, p. 144.

<sup>111</sup> Vol. VII, p. 55.

<sup>112</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 52.

<sup>113</sup> Same, pp. 50 f.

<sup>114</sup> Same, p. 53.

or he may have understood the author to be speaking of poetic and prophetic inspiration in the terms of the Old Testament, or he may have understood him to be speaking of the voice of nature, or the divine immanence of nature as the "god within." In seeking to determine whether Young's essay was the main possible source of these ideas, we find such instances as the following where these ideas occurred in Germany prior to Young's essay. Hamann compares and identifies the inspiration of Socrates by his *Daimonion* and that of Peter by the Holy Ghost,<sup>115</sup> and speaks also of the "still, small voice" heard in the Word of God and in our hearts.<sup>116</sup> Lessing says, the poet gets orders from his "Schutzgeist,"<sup>117</sup> and this term is the special German equivalent for the *Daimonion* of Socrates. He exclaims also: "Alas, poor poesy! Instead of enthusiasm and gods within, rules suffice now."<sup>118</sup> Bodmer speaks of the poet being "des Gottes voll" (inspired by the deity) which taught David.<sup>119</sup> Finally it is to be noted that Opitz quotes from Ovid: "Est deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo," and translates this line about as follows: "There is a spirit within us, and what is written, thought, or said by us is incited by him." He adds: "Where this natural impulse is present, which Plato calls a divine furor, in distinction from madness and dullness, neither invention nor words need to be sought."<sup>120</sup> After these forerunners, and with its definite restriction, Young's statement that genius is a god within cannot have been very effective in Germany.

Such are some of the essential circumstances as to the relation of Young's *Conjectures* to Germany. Further search would reveal still more of this kind. Those which have been so far presented in this chapter will suffice, however, to show that all the important ideas of Young were present and current in Germany before they arrived there anew in the form of the *Conjectures*. The Germans had learned most of them from such foreign sources as are quoted in Section II of the Appendix with regard to their parallels to the *Conjectures* and as the probable sources of them.

We shall next consider those German parallels which came chronologically in the wake of the *Conjectures*. There are hundreds of them, but less than ten can be traced with certainty to the *Conjectures* as

<sup>115</sup> Vol. I, pp. 138 f.

<sup>116</sup> Vol. I, p. 89.

<sup>117</sup> Vol. VII, p. 7.

<sup>118</sup> Vol. I, p. 252.

<sup>119</sup> *Deutsche Literaturdenkmale*, Vol. XII, p. 69.

<sup>120</sup> *Buch von der deutschen Poeterey*, p. 55.

their source, and the latter are, furthermore, by no means epoch-making cases. The majority of them bear no clew to their origin except similarity to the *Conjectures* and, likewise, to many similar treatises, and they leave us in doubt whether they were original with their authors, whether they owe their origin to Young's essay, or whether they were derived from other foreign sources or from German precursors. These two kinds of passages are given in Section II of the Appendix. The third category of the passages in question can be traced with certainty to other sources than the *Conjectures*, and these will now be considered.

Many of the passages in this group occur in the works of Lessing. No one had studied and applied both home and foreign literary criticism more comprehensively and effectively than he, and yet, without ever quoting the *Conjectures*, however fittingly he might have done so, he continues after their publication to quote other sources, both foreign and native. He quotes Diderot as to genius, invention, and poetic fire, and concerning the uselessness of rules and the necessity of following nature.<sup>121</sup> As to the imitation of nature, of which the *Conjectures* make so much, he had also said previously: "Not only Batteux, but also Horace and Aristotle say: Imitate nature!"<sup>122</sup> And speaking of giving material encouragement, and offering rewards, to men of genius Lessing says in the words of Meinhardt: "The true genius, like a dashing river, makes its way alone through the greatest obstacles. . . . Encouragements can never produce a genius."<sup>123</sup> But the most striking evidence of Lessing's independence of Young's essay is shown where he speaks of the poet as a creator. However forbiddingly the *Conjectures* limit their argument that genius has creative power, this is nevertheless their most significant argument. But independently of Young's essay Lessing speaks of the poet as the "mortal creator" and says his work ought to resemble that of the "eternal creator."<sup>124</sup> In the very year in which the *Conjectures* were published Lessing writes that he has Joseph Warton's essay "On the Genius and Writings of Pope" lying open before him, the book which was dedicated by its author to Young and which seems to have been one of the principal sources of the ideas expressed in the *Conjectures*. Lessing quotes from this book as to the

<sup>121</sup> Vol. X, p. 142.

<sup>122</sup> Vol. V, p. 387.

<sup>123</sup> Vol. VIII, p. 283.

<sup>124</sup> Vol. X, p. 120.

"genuine poet, of a lively, plastic imagination, the *true maker*, or *creator*."<sup>125</sup>

Gellert, Hamann, and Winkelmann also voice many of Young's ideas, but they quote them from other sources than the *Conjectures*. Gellert says that all true literary rules are but principles of nature, and in regard to them he says, we must read the works of the ancients "in the same spirit in which they were written," and he quotes these ideas from *Pope's Essay on Criticism*.<sup>126</sup> Hamann speaks of genius as a sort of deity, and he does so sometimes with reference to Socrates,<sup>127</sup> and sometimes with reference to the Scriptures.<sup>128</sup> Winkelmann, the ardent advocate of following nature in literature and art, says also after the publication of the *Conjectures* that nature, and not the writings of others, are to be imitated, and as authority for this principle he quotes the ancients.<sup>129</sup>

Gerstenberg's "Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe" continue to advocate Young's literary principles and to quote them from other sources than the *Conjectures*. As to translating of original literary works Cowley is quoted,<sup>130</sup> and as to the relative value of translations and originals a French authority is cited.<sup>131</sup> Pope is quoted to the effect that the essential characteristic of a genius is the power of invention,<sup>132</sup> and also as to poetic fire, or *vivida vis animi*, as he says in the introduction to his translation of Homer.<sup>133</sup> As to the misuse of literary rules and also concerning the creative power of the imagination, which form the main issue of the *Conjectures*, Gerstenberg quotes Thomas Warton's far-reaching *Observations on the Fairy Queen*.<sup>134</sup> He quotes also Aristotle as to poetic creation.<sup>135</sup> As to the passions as factors in composition, about which the *Conjectures* speak so forcefully, Gerstenberg quotes the *Elements of Criticism* by Home, or Lord Kames.<sup>136</sup> As to the discovery and awakening of genius Gerstenberg quotes a French passage.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Vol. VIII, p. 230.

<sup>126</sup> Gellert, Vol. VIII, p. 91.

<sup>127</sup> Vol. II, p. 38.

<sup>128</sup> Vol. II, p. 92.

<sup>129</sup> Vol. I, p. 87.

<sup>130</sup> *Deutsche Literaturdenkmale*, Vol. XXIX, p. 95.

<sup>131</sup> Same, Vol. XXIX, p. 96.

<sup>132</sup> Same, Vol. XXX, p. 227.

<sup>133</sup> Same, Vol. XXIX, p. 18.

<sup>134</sup> Same, Vol. XXIX, pp. 41-42.

<sup>135</sup> Vol. XXX, p. 223.

<sup>136</sup> Same, Vol. XXIX, p. 125.

<sup>137</sup> Same, Vol. XXX, p. 220.

Approaching Herder now, we come to that German writer who might seem to be the most exhaustive imitator of the *Conjectures*. Most of his numerous and close parallels to the *Conjectures*, however, give no clew to their origin except similarity, and that they bear likewise to a multitude of other possible sources. But the following passages he ascribes expressly to other sources than Young's essay. How well he could have made the *Conjectures* the basis for his discussions of the poet as a creator, but he uses other authorities. From Bacon he quotes to the effect that it is a fiery imagination which makes the poet, the creator in science, and the bringer of new light, and that it is by virtue of this creative power that the genius creates a new world within and around us.<sup>138</sup> From Klopstock he quotes a definition of genius,<sup>139</sup> and employs also his special term for creative genius, namely "Geistschöpfer."<sup>140</sup> After the statement "I continue in the technical language of Baumgarten" by way of preface, Herder quotes from this author concerning the natural aesthetics and the superiority over rules of an imaginative and fiery genius.<sup>141</sup> For the most explicit definition of genius Herder takes the assertions of Socrates concerning his *Daimonion* as basis. "Like Socrates," he says, "all great men have a genius, which forms the soul of their soul, and leads them along the course fixed for them by nature, and guides all their sensation, ideas, and actions."<sup>142</sup> And in the following year he repeats: "I believe every man has a genius, that is, deep in his soul he has a certain divine, prophetic gift, which guides him, a light which, if we do not completely blunt and extinguish it, will suddenly light our way at the darkest point of a crossroad. Such was the *Daimonion* of Socrates, and only certain attentive, superior, and unsophisticated souls can notice this genius."<sup>143</sup> As to the awakening of genius, concerning which the *Conjectures* speak of "men of genius striking fire against each other," Herder quotes Plato saying, "as a magnet by contact transfers its power to numberless other bodies, so a genius, by his continuous miracles, will inspire other men of genius."<sup>144</sup> Speaking of Shakespeare's creative power Herder says, it was as if he said "be," and "there was," thus using the words of the Creator accord-

<sup>138</sup> Vol. VIII, p. 329.

<sup>139</sup> Vol. VIII, p. 222.

<sup>140</sup> Vol. I, p. 381.

<sup>141</sup> Vol. IV, p. 23.

<sup>142</sup> Vol. IV, p. 463.

<sup>143</sup> Minor, *Hamann in seiner Bedeutung für die Sturm- und Drangperiode*, p. 30.

<sup>144</sup> Vol. I, p. 5.

ing to the Old Testament.<sup>145</sup> With reference to Psalm 139 and to Shakespeare's characterization of the poet as a creator Herder says that passions and imagination constitute the creative power of the poet.<sup>146</sup> In discussing a structure of the poetic imagination he speaks of the "realm of possible worlds," and he is obviously using terminology which comes from Leibnitz.<sup>147</sup> He quotes the "Literaturbriefe" as to "inspired imagination,"<sup>148</sup> and Plato as to "divine inspiration,"<sup>149</sup> and as to observing and following nature, of which the *Conjectures* make so much, Herder quotes Rousseau and speaks of "an Emil and pupil of nature."<sup>150</sup> From the same author he cites another idea which was contained in Young's essay, namely the assertion: "The more books, the less wisdom."<sup>151</sup>

Kant also agrees that the essential characteristic of genius consists of a productive imagination. This assertion is in essence the central teaching of the *Conjectures*, but Kant quotes it from Gerard's essay on genius.<sup>152</sup> Furthermore, while the *Conjectures* say, "so boundless are the bold excursions of the human mind, that in the vast void beyond real existence it can call forth shadowy beings and unknown worlds as numerous, as bright, and perhaps as lasting as the stars,"<sup>153</sup> Kant is obviously not drawing from them, but is using an idea which was adapted by his German predecessors directly from Leibnitz, and made a commonplace in German literary criticism when he says, "I see myself transported into the land of possibilities, of fiction and imagination."<sup>154</sup> The term genius, says Kant, comes from the Latin, and he defines it in the terms of the ancients, who spoke of a tutelary and prophetic genius, calling their poets *vates*, or prophets, and who called the talent of inventive imagination genius because they believed that a divine genius inspired their ideas.<sup>155</sup> Finally, in addition to the instances so far given where Kant mentions other sources than the *Conjectures* as bases of his literary theories, the following statement by Schlapp has a very direct

<sup>145</sup> Vol. VIII, p. 329.

<sup>146</sup> Vol. VIII, pp. 77 and 112.

<sup>147</sup> Vol. I, p. 11.

<sup>148</sup> Vol. I, p. 463.

<sup>149</sup> Vol. I, p. 324.

<sup>150</sup> Vol. II, p. 217.

<sup>151</sup> Vol. I, p. 139.

<sup>152</sup> Schlapp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 264.

<sup>153</sup> *Conjectures*, p. 61.

<sup>154</sup> Schlapp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 168.

<sup>155</sup> Same, p. 284.



bearing on the point in question. He says, among those who have written about genius there are to be mentioned in connection with Kant: Bouhours, Rapin, Fontenelle, Perrault, Sir William Temple, Shaftesbury, Addison, Dubos, Trublet, Condillac, Louis Racine, Baumgarten, Meier, Hurd, Trescho, D'Alembert, Diderot, Sulzer, Helvetius, Young, Resewitz, Hamann, J. G. Zimmermann, Abbt, Lessing, Mendelssohn, Flögel, Gerstenberg, Duff, Lindner, Herder, Garve, J. A. Schlegel, Voltaire, Platner, Gerard, Lenz, Eberhard, Lavater, M. Engel, J. Ch. König. "Even if Kant has not consulted all of these authorities," he adds, "it is nevertheless to be assumed that the far-reaching influences which went out from them have, to some extent, reached him."<sup>156</sup>

This statement as to Kant, however incomplete as a list of others besides Young from which Kant might have learned his literary theories, applies for the most part equally well to the other German writers that are under consideration in this chapter. And a careful study of this list of critics and of the numerous precursors of Young that are quoted in the Appendix and also of the numerous German treatises similar to Young's essay but written independently of it, will make it very probable that but few of the German parallels which followed, but do not mention the *Conjectures*, owe their origin to them. Moreover, a careful, comprehensive consideration of all these possible sources of those German parallels to Young's essay which followed it, is absolutely necessary in order to judge correctly as to the rôle which Young's *Conjectures* played in Germany.

The conclusion will then be based on such facts as have now been given, and which may be summarized briefly thus: Long before Young's essay was written most of his literary theories, and even his literary terminology, were current in Germany. For the most part they had come in from without, first from France and then, in a larger measure, from England. The most effective propaganda for them in Germany up to the time of Young's essay were made by Bodmer and Breitinger, by Gellert,<sup>157</sup> and by Lessing. While these men were lecturing and writing in support of these doctrines, there sprang up in Germany, and kept on coming in from without, particularly from England, a multitude of literary and aesthetic treatises similar in various ways and degrees to Young's essay. For several decades they continued to appear and resulted in the Storm and Stress Period. Young's *Conjectures* were but one among a multitude of factors in that great reconstructive period of

<sup>156</sup> Schlapp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 245.

<sup>157</sup> *Grimms deutsches Wörterbuch*, Genie (9).

literary criticism which began, on the larger scale, with Bodmer and Breitinger and closed with the Storm and Stress Period, and the *Conjectures* were neither the most forceful nor a frequently mentioned one of these factors.

After noting these circumstances fully and weighing them carefully, we can conclude only that the *Conjectures* did not exert a decisive influence on the literature of Germany. They contain ideas which, although often in a different form, were of the greatest importance in the development of Germany's literature, and they contributed something to the prevalence and force of these ideas. Germany, however, does not owe these ideas or their momentum in any decisive measure to Young's essay. <sup>158</sup>The literature of Germany would not have been poorer as to contents, nor would it have developed along different lines, without Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition*.

<sup>158</sup> See also Friedrich Gundolph, *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist*, p. 158 ff.

Conjectures  
On  
Original Composition  
In A  
Letter  
To The  
Author  
of  
Sir Charles Grandison.

Si habet aliquot tanquam pabulum studii et doctrinae,  
otiosa senectute nihil est jucundius. Cic.



London:  
Printed for A. Millar, in The Strand; and  
R. and G. Dodsley, in Pall-Mall.

M.DCC LIX.



### CHAPTER III

DEAR SIR,

We confess the follies of youth without a blush; not so those of age. However, keep me a little in countenance by considering that age wants amusements more, though it can justify them less, than the preceding periods of life. How you may relish the pastime here sent you, I know not. It is miscellaneous in its nature, somewhat licentious in its conduct; and, perhaps, not over-important in its end. However, I have endeavored to make some amends by digressing into subjects more important, and more suitable to my season of life. A serious thought standing single, among many of a lighter nature, will sometimes strike the careless wanderer after amusement only, with useful awe: as monumental marbles scattered in a wide pleasure-garden (and such there are) will call to recollection those who would never have sought it in a church-yard walk of mournful yews.

To one such monument I may conduct you, in which is a hidden lustre, like the sepulchral lamps of old; but not like them<sup>1</sup> will this be extinguished, but shine the brighter for being produced, after so long concealment, into open day.

You remember that your worthy patron, and our common friend, put some questions on the serious drama, at the same time when he desired our sentiments on original and moral composition. Though I despair of breaking through the frozen obstructions of age, and care's incumbent cloud, into that flow of thought and brightness of expression which such polite subjects<sup>2</sup> require, yet will I hazard some conjectures on them.

I begin with original composition; but,<sup>3</sup> first, a few thoughts on composition in general. Some are of opinion that its growth, at present, is too luxuriant, and that the press is overcharged. Overcharged, I think, it could never be, if none were admitted but such as brought their *imprimatur* from sound understanding and the public good. Wit, indeed, however brilliant, should not be permitted to gaze self-enamoured on its useless charms in that fountain of fame, (if so I may call the press,) if beauty is all that it has to boast; but, like the first Brutus, it should

<sup>1</sup> those

<sup>2</sup> subjects so polite

<sup>3</sup> Composition; and the more willingly, as it seems an original subject to me, who have seen nothing hitherto written on it. But

sacrifice its most darling offspring to the sacred interests of virtue, and real service of mankind.

This restriction allowed, the more composition the better. To men of letters and leisure, it is not only a noble amusement, but a sweet refuge; it improves their parts and promotes their peace; it opens a back-door out of the bustle of this busy and idle world into a delicious garden of moral and intellectual fruits and flowers, the key of which is denied to the rest of mankind. When stung with idle anxieties, or teased with fruitless impertinence, or yawning over insipid diversions, then we perceive the blessing of a lettered recess. With what a gust do we retire to our disinterested and immortal friends in our closet and find our minds, when applied to some favorite theme, as naturally and as easily quieted and refreshed as a peevish child (and peevish children are we all till we fall asleep) when laid to the breast! Our happiness no longer lives on charity; nor bids fair for a fall by leaning on that most precarious and thorny pillow, another's pleasure, for our repose. How independent of the world is he who can daily find new acquaintance that at once entertain and improve him, in the little world, the minute but fruitful creation of his own mind!

These advantages composition affords us, whether we write ourselves, or in more humble amusement peruse the works of others. While we bustle through the thronged walks of public life, it gives us a respite, at least, from care; a pleasing pause of refreshing recollection. If the country is our choice or fate, there it rescues us from sloth and sensuality, which, like obscene vermin, are apt gradually to creep unperceived into the delightful bowers of our retirement and to poison all its sweets. Conscious guilt robs the rose of its scent, the lily of its lustre; and makes an Eden a deflowered and dismal scene.

Moreover, if we consider life's endless evils, what can be more prudent than to provide for consolation under them? A consolation under them the wisest of men have found in the pleasures of the pen. Witness, among many more, Thucydides, Xenophon, Tully, Ovid, Seneca, Pliny the younger, who says, *In uxoris infirmitate, et amicorum periculo, aut morte turbatus, ad studia, unicum doloris levamentum, confugio*. And why not add to these their modern equals, Raleigh,<sup>4</sup> Milton, Clarendon, under the same shield, unwounded by misfortune, and nobly smiling in distress?

Composition was a cordial to these under the frowns of fortune; but evils there are which her smiles cannot prevent or cure. Among these

<sup>4</sup> Chaucer, Raleigh, Bacon,

are the languors of old age. If those are held honorable who in a hand benumbed by time have grasped the just sword in defence of their country, shall they be less esteemed whose unsteady pen vibrates to the last in the cause of religion, of virtue, of learning? Both these are happy in this, that, by fixing their attention on objects most important, they escape numberless little anxieties and that *tedium vitæ* which hangs often so heavy on its evening hours. May not this insinuate some apology for my spilling ink and spoiling paper so late in life?

But there are who write with vigor and success to the world's delight and their own renown. These are the glorious fruits where genius prevails. The mind of a man of genius is a fertile and pleasant field; pleasant as Elysium, and fertile as Tempe; it enjoys a perpetual spring. Of that spring originals are the fairest flowers: imitations are of quicker growth, but fainter bloom. Imitations are of two kinds; one of nature, one of authors: the first we call "originals," and confine the term "imitation" to the second. I shall not enter into the curious inquiry of what is, or is not, strictly speaking, original, content with what all must allow, that some compositions are more so than others; and the more they are so, I say, the better. Originals are, and ought to be, great favorites, for they are great benefactors; they extend the republic of letters, and add a new province to its dominion: imitators only give us a sort of duplicates of what we had, possibly much better, before; increasing the mere drug of books, while all that makes them valuable, knowledge and genius, are at a stand. The pen of an original writer, like Armida's wand, out of a barren waste calls a blooming spring: out of that blooming spring an imitator is a transplanter of laurels, which sometimes die on removal, always languish in a foreign soil.

But suppose an imitator to be most excellent, (and such there are,) yet still he but nobly builds on another's foundation; his debt is, at least, equal to his glory; which, therefore, on the balance, cannot be very great. On the contrary, an original, though but indifferent (its originality being set aside,) yet has something to boast; it is something to say with him in Horace,

Meo sum pauper in aere;

and to share ambition with no less than Caesar, who declared he had rather be the first in a village than the second at Rome.

Still farther: an imitator shares his crown, if he has one, with the chosen object of his imitation; an original enjoys an undivided applause. An original may be said to be of a vegetable nature: it rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius; it grows, it is not made; imitations

are often a sort of manufacture wrought up by those mechanics, art and labor, out of pre-existent materials not their own.

Again: we read imitation with somewhat of his languor who listens to a twice-told tale: our spirits rouse at an original: that is a perfect stranger, and all throng to learn what news from a foreign land; and though it comes, like an Indian prince, adorned with feathers only, having little of weight, yet of our attention it will rob the more solid, if not equally new. Thus every telescope is lifted at a new discovered star: it makes a hundred astronomers in a moment, and denies equal notice to the sun. But if an original, by being as excellent as new, adds admiration to surprise, then are we at the writer's mercy; on the strong wing of his imagination we are snatched from Britain to Italy, from climate to climate, from pleasure to pleasure; we have no home, no thought, of our own, till the magician drops his pen; and then, falling down into ourselves, we awake to flat realities, lamenting the change, like the beggar who dreamt himself a prince.

It is with thoughts as it is with words, and with both as with men: they may grow old and die. Words tarnished by passing through the mouths of the vulgar, are laid aside as inelegant and obsolete. So thoughts, when become too common, should lose their currency; and we should send new metal to the mint, that is, new meaning to the press. The division of tongues at Babel did not more effectually debar men from "making themselves a name" (as the Scripture speaks) than the too great concurrence or union of tongues will do for ever. We may as well grow good by another's virtue, or fat by another's food, as famous by another's thought. The world will pay its debt of praise but once, and, instead of applauding, explode a second demand as a cheat.

If it is said that most of the Latin classics, and all the Greek, except, perhaps, Homer, Pindar, and Anacreon, are in the number of imitators, yet receive our highest applause; our answer is, that they, though not real, are accidental originals; the works they imitated, few excepted, are lost; they, on their fathers' decease, enter as lawful heirs on their estates in fame: the fathers of our copyists are still in possession; and secured in it, in spite of Goths and flames, by the perpetuating power of the press. Very late must a modern imitator's fame arrive, if it waits for their decease.

An original enters early upon reputation: Fame, fond of new glories, sounds her trumpet in triumph at its birth; and yet how few are awakened by it into the noble ambition of like attempts! Ambition is sometimes no vice in life; it is always a virtue in composition. High in the towering



Alps is the fountain of the Po; high in fame, and in antiquity, is the fountain of an imitator's undertaking; but the river and the imitation humbly creep along the vale. So few are our originals, that, if all other books were to be burnt, the lettered world would resemble some metropolis in flames, where a few incombustible buildings, a fortress, temple, or tower, lift their heads in melancholy grandeur, amid the mighty ruin. Compared with this conflagration, old Omar lighted up but a small bonfire when he heated the baths of the barbarians, for eight months together, with the famed Alexandrian library's inestimable spoils, that no profane book might obstruct the triumphant progress of his holy Alcoran round the globe.

But why are originals so few? Not because the writer's harvest is over, the great reapers of antiquity having left nothing to be gleaned after them; nor because the human mind's teeming time is past, or because it is incapable of putting forth unprecedented births; but because illustrious examples engross, prejudice, and intimidate. They *engross* our attention, and so prevent a due inspection of ourselves; they *prejudice* our judgment in favor of their abilities, and so lessen the sense of our own; and they *intimidate* us with the splendor of their renown, and thus under diffidence bury our strength. Nature's impossibilities, and those of diffidence, lie wide asunder.

Let it not be suspected that I would weakly insinuate anything in favor of the moderns, as compared with ancient authors; no, I am lamenting their great inferiority. But I think it is no necessary inferiority; that it is not from Divine destination, but from some cause far beneath the moon.<sup>5</sup> I think that human souls, through all periods, are equal; that due care and exertion would set us nearer our immortal predecessors than we are at present; and he who questions and confutes this, will show abilities not a little tending toward a proof of that equality which he denies.

After all, the first ancients had no merit in being originals: they could not be imitators. Modern writers have a choice to make, and therefore have a merit in their power. They may soar in the regions of liberty, or move in the soft fetters of easy imitation; and imitation has as many plausible reasons to urge as pleasure had to offer to Hercules. Hercules made the choice of a hero and so became immortal.

Yet let not assertors of classic excellence imagine that I deny the tribute it so well deserves. He that admires not ancient authors, betrays a secret he would conceal, and tells the world that he does not

<sup>5</sup> Enquiry into the life of Homer, p. 76.

understand them. Let us be as far from neglecting, as from copying, their admirable compositions: sacred be their rights, and inviolable their fame. Let our understanding feed on theirs; they afford the noblest nourishment; but let them nourish, not annihilate, our own. When we read, let our imagination kindle at their charms; when we write, let our judgment shut them out of our thoughts; treat even Homer himself as his royal admirer was treated by the cynic,—bid him stand aside, nor shade our composition from the beams of our own genius; for nothing original can rise, nothing immortal can ripen, in any other sun.

"Must we then," you say, "not imitate ancient authors?" Imitate them by all means; but imitate aright. He that imitates the divine Iliad does not imitate Homer; but he who takes the same method which Homer took for arriving at a capacity of accomplishing a work so great. Tread in his steps to the sole fountain of immortality; drink where he drank, at the true Helicon, that is, at the breast of nature. Imitate; but imitate not the composition, but the man. For may not this paradox pass into a maxim?—namely, "The less we copy the renowned ancients, we shall resemble them the more."

But possibly you may reply that you must either imitate Homer, or depart from nature. No so: for suppose you were to change place, in time, with Homer, then, if you write naturally, you might as well charge Homer with an imitation of you. Can you be said to imitate Homer for writing so as you would have written, if Homer had never been? As far as a regard to nature and sound sense will permit a departure from your great predecessors, so far ambitiously depart from them; the farther from them in similitude, the nearer are you to them in excellence; you rise by it into an original; become a noble collateral, not an humble descendant from them. Let us build our compositions with the spirit and in the taste of the ancients; but not with their materials: thus will they resemble the structures of Pericles at Athens, which Plutarch commends for having had an air of antiquity as soon as they were built. All eminence and distinction lies out of the beaten road; excursion and deviation are necessary to find it; and the more remote your path from the highway, the more reputable, if, like poor Gulliver, (of whom anon,) you fall not into a ditch in your way to glory.

What glory to come near, what glory to reach, what glory (presumptuous thought!) to surpass, our predecessors! And is that, then, in nature absolutely impossible? Or is it not rather contrary to nature to fail in it? Nature herself sets the ladder, all wanting is our ambition to climb. For, by the bounty of nature, we are as strong as our pre-

decessors, and by the favor of time (which is but another round in nature's scale) we stand on higher ground. As to the first, were they more than men? Or are we less? Are not our minds cast in the same mould with those before the flood? The flood affected matter; mind escaped. As to the second, though we are moderns, the world is an ancient; more ancient far than when they filled it with their fame, whom we most admire.<sup>6</sup> Have we not their beauties, as stars, to guide; their defects, as rocks, to be shunned; the judgment of ages on both, as a chart to conduct, and a sure helm to steer us in our passage to greater perfection than theirs? And shall we be stopped in our rival pretensions to fame by this just reproof?

Stat contra, dicitque tibi tua pagina, Fur es.—Mart.

It is by a sort of noble contagion, from a general familiarity with their writings, and not by any particular sordid theft, that we can be the better for those who went before us. Hope we from plagiarism any dominion in literature, as that of Rome arose from a nest of thieves?

Rome was a powerful ally to many states; ancient authors are our powerful allies; but we must take heed that they do not succor till they enslave, after the manner of Rome. Too formidable an idea of their superiority, like a spectre, would fright us out of a proper use of our wits, and dwarf our understanding, by making a giant of theirs. Too great awe for them lays genius under restraint and denies it that free scope, that full elbow-room, which is a requisite for striking its most masterly strokes. Genius is a master-workman, learning is but an instrument; and an instrument, though most valuable, yet not always indispensable. Heaven will not admit of a partner in the accomplishment of some favorite spirits; but rejecting all human means, assumes the whole glory to itself. Have not some, though not famed for erudition, so written as almost to persuade us that they shone brighter and soared higher for escaping the boasted aid of that proud ally?

Nor is it strange; for what, for the most part, mean we by genius but the power of accomplishing great things without the means generally reputed necessary to that end? A genius differs from a good understanding, as a magician from a good architect; that raises his structure by means invisible, this by the skilful use of common tools. Hence genius has ever been supposed to partake of something Divine. *Nemo unquam vir magnus fuit, sine aliquo afflatu divino.*

Learning, destitute of this superior aid, is fond and proud of what has cost it much pains; is a great lover of rules, and boaster of famed

<sup>6</sup> they whom we most admire filled it with their fame.

examples. As beauties less perfect, who owe half their charms to cautious art, she<sup>7</sup> inveighs against natural, unstudied graces and small, harmless indecorums, and sets rigid bounds to that liberty to which genius often owes its supreme glory, but the non-genius its frequent ruin. For unprescribed beauties and unexampled excellence, which are characteristics of genius, lie without the pale of learning's authorities and laws; which pale, genius must leap to come at them: but by that leap, if genius is wanting, we break our necks: we lose that little credit which possibly we might have enjoyed before. For rules, like crutches, are a needful aid to the lame, though an impediment to the strong. A Homer casts them away and, like Achilles,

Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat,

by native force of mind. There is something in poetry beyond prose reason; there are mysteries in it not to be explained, but admired, which render mere prose-men infidels to their divinity. And here pardon a second paradox: namely, "Genius often then deserves most to be praised when it is most sure to be condemned; that is, when its excellence, from mounting high, to weak eyes is quite out of sight."

If I might speak farther of learning and genius, I would compare genius to virtue, and learning to riches. As riches are most wanted where there is least virtue, so learning where there is least genius. As virtue without much riches can give happiness, so genius without much learning can give renown. As it is said in Terence, *Pecuniam negligere interdum maximum est lucrum*, so to neglect of learning genius sometimes owes its greater glory. Genius, therefore, leaves but the second place, among men of letters, to the learned. It is their merit and ambition to fling light on the works of genius, and point out its charms. We most justly reverence their informing radius for that favor; but we must much more admire the radiant stars pointed out by them.

A star of the first magnitude among the moderns was Shakespeare; among the ancients, Pindar; who, as Vossius tells us, boasted of his no-learning, calling himself the eagle, for his flight above it. And such genii as these may, indeed, have much reliance on their own native powers. For genius may be compared to the body's natural strength;<sup>8</sup> learning to the superinduced accoutrements of arms. If the first is equal to the proposed exploit, the latter rather encumbers than assists; rather retards, than promotes, the victory. *Sacer nobis inest Deus*, says Seneca. With regard to the moral world, conscience—with regard to

<sup>7</sup> learning

<sup>8</sup> to the natural strength of the body

the intellectual, genius—is that god within. Genius can set us right in composition without the rules of the learned, as conscience sets us right in life without the laws of the land; this, singly, can make us good, as men; that, singly, as writers, can sometimes make us great.

I say “sometimes,” because there is a genius which stands in need of learning to make it shine. Of genius there are two species, an earlier and a later; or call them infantine and adult. An adult genius comes out of nature’s hand, as Pallas out of Jove’s head, at full growth and mature: Shakespeare’s genius was of this kind: on the contrary, Swift stumbled at the threshold, and set out for distinction on feeble knees. His was an infantine genius; a genius, which, like other infants, must be nursed and educated, or it will come to nought. Learning is its nurse and tutor; but this nurse may overlay with an indigested load, which smothers common sense; and this tutor may mislead with pedantic prejudice, which vitiates the best understanding. . As too great admirers of the fathers of the church have sometimes set up their authority against the true sense of Scripture, so too great admirers of the classical fathers have sometimes set up their authority, or example, against reason.

*Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu fabula.*

So says Horace, so says ancient example. But reason has not subscribed. I know but one book that can justify our implicit acquiescence in it.<sup>9</sup>

But superstition<sup>10</sup> set aside, the classics are forever our rightful and revered masters in composition, and our understandings bow before them. But when? When a master is wanted; which sometimes, as I have shown, is not the case. Some are pupils of nature only, nor go farther to school. From such we reap often a double advantage; they not only rival the reputation of the great ancient authors, but also reduce the number of mean ones among the moderns. For, when they enter on subjects which have been in former hands, such is their superiority, that, like a tenth wave, they overwhelm and bury in oblivion all that went before; and thus not only enrich and adorn, but remove a load, and lessen the labor, of the lettered world.

“But,” you say, “since originals can arise from genius only, and since genius is so very rare, it is scarce worth while to labor a point so much from which we can reasonably expect so little.” To show that genius is not so very rare as you imagine, I shall point out strong instances of it in a far distant quarter from that mentioned above. The minds

<sup>9</sup> it: and (by the way) on that book a noble disdain of undue deference to prior opinion has lately cast a new and inestimable light.

<sup>10</sup> for our predecessors

of the schoolmen were almost as much cloistered as their bodies; they had but little learning and few books; yet may the most learned be struck with some astonishment at their so singular natural sagacity and most exquisite edge of thought. Who would expect to find Pindar and Scotus, Shakespeare and Aquinas, of the same party? Both equally show an original, unindebted energy; the *vigor igneus* and *coelestis origo* burn in both and leave us in doubt if<sup>11</sup> genius is more evident in the sublime flights and beauteous flowers of poetry, or in the profound penetrations and marvellously keen and minute distinctions called the "thorns of the schools." There might have been more able consuls called from the plow than ever arrived at that honor; many a genius, probably, there has been which could neither write nor read. So that genius, that supreme lustre of literature, is less rare than you conceive.

By the praise of genius we detract not from learning; we detract not from the value of gold by saying that a diamond has greater still. He who disregards learning, shows that he wants its aid; and he that overvalues it, shows that its aid has done him harm. Over-valued, indeed, it cannot be, if genius, as to composition, is valued more. Learning we thank, genius we revere; that gives us pleasure, this gives us rapture; that informs, this inspires, and is itself inspired; for genius is from heaven, learning from man: this sets us above the low and illiterate; that, above the learned and polite. Learning is borrowed knowledge; genius is knowledge innate, and quite our own. Therefore, as Bacon observes, it may take a nobler name, and be called "wisdom"; in which sense of wisdom, some are born wise.

But here a caution is necessary against the most fatal of errors in those automats, those "self-taught philosophers" of our age, who set up genius, and often mere fancied genius, not only above human learning, but divine truth. I have called genius "wisdom"; but let it be remembered that in the most renowned ages of the most refined heathen wisdom, (and theirs is not Christian,) "the world by wisdom knew not God; and it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believed." In the fairyland of fancy, genius may wander wild; there it has a creative power, and may reign arbitrarily over its own empire of chimeras. The wide field of nature also lies open before it, where it may range unconfined, make what discoveries it can, and sport with its infinite objects uncontrolled, as far as visible nature extends, painting them as wantonly as it will. But what painter of the most unbounded and exalted genius can give us the true portrait of a seraph?

<sup>11</sup> whether

He can give us only what by his own, or others' eyes, has been seen; though that indeed infinitely compounded, raised, burlesqued, dishonored, or adorned. In like manner, who can give us Divine truth unrevealed? Much less should any presume to set aside Divine truth when revealed, as incongruous to their own sagacities. Is this too serious for my subject? I shall be more so before I close.

Having put in a caveat against the most fatal of errors from the too great indulgence of genius, return we now to that too great suppression of it, which is detrimental to composition, and endeavor to rescue the writer, as well as the man. I have said that some are born wise; but they, like those that are born rich, by neglecting the cultivation and produce of their own possessions, and by running in debt, may be beggared at last; and lose their reputations, as younger brothers estates, not by being born with less abilities than the rich heir, but at too late an hour.

Many a great man has been lost to himself and the public purely because great ones were born before him. Hermias, in his Collections on Homer's blindness, says that Homer requesting the Gods to grant him a sight of Achilles, that hero rose, but in armor so bright that it struck Homer blind with the blaze. Let not the blaze of even Homer's muse darken us to the discernment of our own powers, which may possibly set us above the rank of imitators; who, though most excellent, and even immortal, (as some of them are,) yet are still but *Dii minorum gentium*, nor can expect the largest share of incense, the greatest profusion of praise, on their secondary altars.

But farther still: a spirit of imitation hath many ill effects; I shall confine myself to three. First, it deprives the liberal and politer arts of an advantage which the mechanic enjoy: in these, men are ever endeavoring to go beyond their predecessors; in the former, to follow them. And since copies surpass not their originals, as streams rise not higher than their spring, rarely so high; hence, while arts mechanic are in perpetual progress and increase, the liberal are in the retrogradation and decay. These resemble pyramids,—are broad at bottom, but lessen exceedingly as they rise; those resemble rivers which, from a small fountain-head, are spreading ever wider and wider as they run. Hence it is evident that different portions of understanding are not (as some imagine) allotted to different periods of time; for we see, in the same period, understanding rising in one set of artists and declining in another. Therefore nature stands absolved, and the inferiority of our composition<sup>12</sup> must be charged on ourselves.

<sup>12</sup> our inferiority in composition

Nay, so far are we from complying with a necessity which nature lays us under, that, secondly, by a spirit of imitation we counteract nature and thwart her design. She brings us into the world all originals. No two faces, no two minds, are just alike; but all bear nature's evident mark of separation on them. Born originals, how comes it to pass that we die copies? That meddling ape imitation, as soon as we come to years of indiscretion, (so let me speak,) snatches the pen and blots out nature's mark of separation, cancels her kind intention, destroys all mental individuality. The lettered world no longer consists of singulars; it is a medley, a mass; and a hundred books, at bottom, are but one. Why are monkeys such masters of mimicry? Why receive they such a talent at imitation? Is it not as the Spartan slaves received a licence for ebriety,—that their betters might be ashamed of it?

The third fault to be found with a spirit of imitation is, that, with great incongruity, it makes us poor and proud; makes us think little and write much; gives us huge folios which are little better than more reputable cushions to promote our repose. Have not some sevenfold volumes put us in mind of Ovid's sevenfold channels of the Nile at the conflagration?—

*Ostia septem*

*Pulverulenta vacant septem sine flumine valles.*

Such leaden labors are like Lycurgus's iron money, which was so much less in value than in bulk that it required barns for strong boxes, and a yoke of oxen to draw five hundred pounds.

But notwithstanding these disadvantages of imitation, imitation must be the lot (and often an honorable lot it is) of most writers. If there is a famine of invention in the land, like Joseph's brethren, we must travel far for food; we must visit the remote and rich ancients. But an inventive genius may safely stay at home; that, like the widow's cruse, is divinely replenished from within, and affords us a miraculous delight. Whether our own genius be such or not, we diligently should inquire, that we may not go begging with gold in our purse; for there is a mine in man which must be deeply dug ere we can conjecture its contents. Another often sees that in us which we see not ourselves; and may there not be that in us which is unseen by both? That there may, chance often discovers, either by a luckily chosen theme, or a mighty premium, or an absolute necessity of exertion, or a noble stroke of emulation from another's glory; as that on Thucydides, from hearing Herodotus repeat part of his history at the Olympic games. Had there been no Herodotus, there might have been no Thucydides, and the world's



admiration might have begun at Livy for excellence in that province of the pen. Demosthenes had the same stimulation on hearing Callistratus; or Tully might have been the first of consummate renown at the bar.

Quite clear of the dispute concerning ancient and modern learning, we speak not of performance, but powers. The modern powers are equal to those before them; modern performance in general is deplorably short. How great are the names just mentioned! Yet who will dare affirm that as great may not rise up in some future or even in the present age? Reasons there are why talents may not *appear*, none why they may not *exist*, as much in one period as another. An evocation of vegetable fruits depends on rain, air, and sun; an evocation of the fruits of genius no less depends on externals. What a marvellous crop bore it in Greece and Rome! and what a marvellous sunshine did it there enjoy! what encouragement from the nature of their governments, and the spirit of their people! Virgil and Horace owed their divine talents to Heaven, their immortal works to men: thank Maecenas and Augustus for them. Had it not been for these, the genius of those poets had lain buried in their ashes. Athens expended on her theatre, painting, sculpture, and architecture, a tax levied for the support of a war. Casar dropped his papers when Tully spoke, and Philip trembled at the voice of Demosthenes. And has there shone<sup>13</sup> but one Tully, one Demosthenes, in so long a course of years? The powerful eloquence of them both in one stream should never bear me down into the melancholy persuasion that several have not been born, though they have not emerged. The sun as much exists in a cloudy day as in a clear: it is outward, accidental circumstances that, with regard to genius either in nation or age,

*Collectas fugat nubes, solemque reducit.*—Virg.

As great, perhaps greater than those mentioned, (presumptuous as it may sound,) may possibly arise; for who hath fathomed the mind of man? Its bounds are as unknown as those of the creation; since the birth of which, perhaps, not one has so far exerted as not to leave his possibilities beyond his attainments, his powers beyond his exploits. Forming our judgments altogether by what has been done without knowing, or at all inquiring, what possibly might have been done, we naturally enough fall into too mean an opinion of the human mind. If a sketch of the divine Iliad before Homer wrote had been given to mankind by some superior being or otherwise, its execution would, probably, have appeared beyond the power of man. Now, to surpass

<sup>13</sup> arisen

it, we think impossible. As the first of these opinions would evidently have been a mistake, why may not the second be so too? Both are founded on the same bottom,—on our ignorance of the possible dimensions of the mind of man.

Nor are we only ignorant of the dimensions of the human mind in general, but even of our own. That a man may be scarce less ignorant of his own powers than an oyster of its pearl, or a rock of its diamond; that he may possess dormant, unsuspected abilities, till awakened by loud calls, or stung up by striking emergencies; is evident from the sudden eruption of some men out of perfect obscurity into public admiration on the strong impulse of some animating occasion; not more to the world's great surprise than their own. Few authors of distinction but have experienced something of this nature at the first beamings of their yet unsuspected genius on their hitherto dark composition. The writer starts at it as at a lucid meteor in the night, is much surprised, can scarce believe it true. During his happy confusion it may be said to him, as to Eve at the lake,

"What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself."—Milton

Genius, in this view, is like a dear friend in our company under disguise; who, while we are lamenting his absence, drops his mask, striking us at once with equal surprise and joy. This sensation which I speak of in a writer, might favor, and so promote, the fable of poetic inspiration. A poet of a strong imagination and stronger vanity, on feeling it, might naturally enough realize the world's mere compliment and think himself truly inspired: which is not improbable; for enthusiasts of all kinds do no less.

Since it is plain that men may be strangers to their own abilities, and by thinking meanly of them without just cause may possibly lose a name, perhaps a name immortal, I would find some means to prevent these evils. Whatever promotes virtue, promotes something more, and carries its good influence beyond the moral man: to prevent these evils, I borrow two golden rules from ethics, which are no less golden in composition than in life: 1. "Know thyself"; 2. "Reverence thyself." I design to repay ethics in a future letter by two rules from rhetoric for its service.

1. "Know thyself." Of ourselves it may be said, as Martial says of a bad neighbor,

Nil tam prope, proculque nobis.

Therefore dive deep into thy bosom; learn the depth, extent, bias, and full fort of thy mind; contract full intimacy with the stranger within

thee; excite and cherish every spark of intellectual light and heat, however smothered under former negligence, or scattered through the dull, dark mass of common thoughts; and, collecting them into a body, let thy genius rise (if a genius thou hast) as the sun from chaos; and if I should then say, like an Indian, "Worship it," (though too bold,) yet should I say little more than my second rule enjoins, namely, "Reverence thyself."

That is, let not great examples or authorities browbeat thy reason into too great a diffidence of thyself: thyself so reverence as to prefer the native growth of thy own mind to the richest import from abroad: such borrowed riches make us poor. The man who thus reverences himself, will soon find the world's reverence to follow his own. His works will stand distinguished; his the sole property of them; which property alone can confer the noble title of an author: that is, of one who, to speak accurately, thinks and composes; while other invaders of the press, how voluminous and learned soever, (with due respect be it spoken,) only read and write.

This is the difference between those two luminaries in literature, the well-accomplished scholar and the divinely-inspired enthusiast: the first is as the bright morning star: the second, as the rising sun. The writer who neglects those two rules above, will never stand alone: he makes one of a group, and thinks in wretched unanimity with the throng. Incumbered with the notions of others, and impoverished by their abundance, he conceives not the least embryo of new thought; opens not the least vista through the gloom of ordinary writers into the bright walks of rare imagination and singular design. While the true genius is crossing all public roads into fresh untrodden ground, he, up to the knees in antiquity, is treading the sacred footsteps of great examples with the blind veneration of a bigot saluting the papal toe; comfortably hoping full absolution for the sins of his own understanding from the powerful charm of touching his idol's infallibility.

Such meanness of mind, such prostration of our own powers, proceeds from too great admiration of others. Admiration has, generally, a degree of two very bad ingredients in it,—of ignorance and of fear, and does mischief in composition and in life. Proud as the world is, there is more superiority in it given than assumed; and its grandees of all kinds owe more of their elevation to the littleness of others' minds, than to the greatness of their own. Were not prostrate spirits their voluntary pedestals, the figure they would make among mankind would not stand so high. Imitators and translators are somewhat of the pedestal-kind,

and sometimes rather raise their original's reputation, by showing him to be by them inimitable, than their own. Homer has been translated into most languages; Aelian tells us that the Indians (hopeful tutors!) have taught him to speak their tongue. What expect we from them? Not Homer's Achilles, but something which, like Patroclus, assumes his name and, at its peril, appears in his stead: nor expect we Homer's Ulysses gloriously bursting out of his cloud into royal grandeur, but an Ulysses under disguise, and a beggar to the last. Such is that inimitable father of poetry, and oracle of all the wise, whom Lycurgus transcribed; and for an annual public recital of whose works Solon enacted a law; that it is much to be feared that his so numerous translations are but as the published testimonials of so many nations and ages, that this author, so divine, is untranslated still.

But here,

*Cynthus aurem vellit; Virg.*

and demands justice for his favorite, and ours. Great things he has done; but he might have done greater. What a fall is it from Homer's numbers, free as air, lofty, and harmonious as the spheres, into childish shackles and tinkling sounds! But, in his fall, he is still great;

"Nor appears

Less than archangel ruin'd, and the excess  
Of glory obscured."—Milt.

Had Milton never wrote, Pope had been less to blame; but when in Milton's genius Homer, as it were, personally rose to forbid Britons doing him that ignoble wrong, it is less pardonable, by that effeminate decoration, to put Achilles in petticoats a second time. How much nobler had it been if his numbers had rolled on in full flow, through the various modulations of masculine melody, into those grandeurs of solemn sound which are indispensably demanded by the native dignity of heroic song! How much nobler, if he had resisted the temptation of that Gothic demon, which modern poesy, tasting, became mortal! O how unlike the deathless, divine harmony of three great names, (how justly joined!) of Milton, Greece, and Rome! His verse, but for this little speck of mortality, in its extreme parts, as his hero had in his heel, like him, had been invulnerable and immortal. But, unfortunately, that was undipped in Helicon, as this in Styx. Harmony, as well as eloquence, is essential to poesy; and a murder of his music is putting half Homer to death. "Blank" is a term of diminution: what we mean by "blank verse" is, verse unfallen, uncursed; verse reclaimed, re-enthroned in the true language of the gods: who never thundered, nor

suffered their Homer to thunder, in rime; and therefore, I beg you, my friend, to crown it with some nobler term; nor let the greatness of the thing lie under the defamation of such a name.

But supposing Pope's Iliad to have been perfect in its kind; yet it is a translation still; which differs as much from an original, as the moon from the sun.

—Phoeben alieno jusserat igne

Impleri, solemque suo.

Claud.

But, as nothing is more easy than to write originally wrong, originals are not here recommended but under the strong guard of my first rule,—“Know thyself.” Lucian, who was an original, neglected not this rule, if we may judge by his reply to one who took some freedom with him. He was at first an apprentice to a statuary; and when he was reflected on as such by being called Prometheus, he replied, “I am, indeed, the inventor of new work, the model of which I owe to none: and if I do not execute it well, I deserve to be torn by twelve vultures, instead of one.”

If so, O Gulliver, dost thou not shudder at thy brother Lucian's vultures hovering over thee? Shudder on! They cannot shock thee more than decency has been shocked by thee. How have thy Houyhnhunms thrown thy judgment from its seat, and laid thy imagination in the mire! In what ordure has thou dipped thy pencil! What a monster hast thou made of the

—Human face divine! Milt.

This writer has so satirized human nature as to give a demonstration in himself that it deserves to be satirized. “But,” say his wholesale admirers, “few could so have written.” True, and fewer would. If it required great abilities to commit the fault, greater still would have saved him from it. But whence arise such warm advocates for such a performance? From hence, namely: Before a character is established, merit makes fame; afterwards fame makes merit. Swift is not commended for this piece, but this piece for Swift. He has given us some beauties which deserve all our praise; and our comfort is, that his faults will not become common; for none can be guilty of them but who have wit as well as reputation to spare. His wit had been less wild, if his temper had not jostled his judgment. If his favorite Houyhnhunms could write, and Swift had been one of them, every horse with him would have been an ass, and he would have written a panegyric on mankind, saddling with much reproach the present heroes of his pen: on the contrary, being born amongst men, and, of consequence, piqued by many, and peevish at more, he has blasphemed a nature little lower

than that of angels, and assumed by far higher than they. But surely the contempt of the world is not a greater virtue, than the contempt of mankind is a vice. Therefore I wonder that, though forborne by others, the laughter-loving Swift was not reprov'd by the venerable Dean, who could sometimes be very grave.

For I remember, as I and others were taking with him an evenings' walk, about a mile out of Dublin, he stopped short: we passed on; but perceiving that he did not follow us, I went back and found him fixed as a statue and earnestly gazing upward at a noble elm which in its uppermost branches was much withered and decayed. Pointing at it he said, "I shall be like that tree: I shall die at top." As in this he seemed to prophecy like the Sybils; if, like one of them, he had burnt part of his works, especially this blasted branch of a noble genius, like her, too, he might have risen in his demand for the rest.

Would not his friend Pope have succeeded better in an original attempt? Talents untried are talents unknown. All that I know is, that, contrary to these sentiments, he was not only an avowed professor of imitation, but a zealous recommender of it also. Nor could he recommend anything better, except emulation, to those who write. One of these all writers must call to their aid; but aids they are of unequal repute. Imitation is inferiority confessed, emulation is superiority contested or denied; imitation is servile, emulation, generous; that fetters, this fires; that may give a name, this a name immortal. This made Athens to succeeding ages the rule of taste and the standard of perfection. Her men of genius struck fire against each other; and kindled by conflict into glories no<sup>14</sup> time shall extinguish. We thank Aeschylus for Sophocles, and Parrhasius for Zeuxis, emulation for both. That bids us fly the general fault of imitators; bids us not be struck with the loud report of former fame as with a knell, which damps the spirits, but as with a trumpet, which inspires ardor to rival the renowned. Emulation exhorts us, instead of learning our discipline forever, like raw troops, under ancient leaders in composition, to put those laurelled veterans in some hazard of losing their superior posts in glory.

Such is emulation's high-spirited advice, such her immortalizing call. Pope would not hear, pre-engaged with imitation, which blessed him with all her charms. He chose rather, with his namesake of Greece, to triumph in the old world, than to look out for a new. His taste partook the error of his religion,—it denied not worship to saints and angels; that is, to writers who, canonized for ages, have received their

<sup>14</sup> which no

apotheosis from established and universal fame. True poesy, like true religion, abhors idolatry; and though it honors the memory of the exemplary, and takes them willingly (yet cautiously) as guides in the way to glory, real (though unexampled) excellence is its only aim; nor looks it for any inspiration less than divine.

Though Pope's noble muse may boast her illustrious descent from Homer, Virgil, Horace, yet is an original author more nobly born. As Tacitus says of Curtius Rufus, an original author is born of himself, is his own progenitor, and will probably propagate a numerous offspring of imitators, to eternize his glory; while mule-like imitators die without issue. Therefore, though we stand much obliged for his giving us a Homer, yet had he doubled our obligation by giving us—a Pope. Had he a strong imagination and the true sublime? That granted, we might have had two Homers instead of one, if longer had been his life; for I heard the dying swan talk over an epic plan a few weeks before his decease.

Bacon, under the shadow of whose great name I would shelter my present attempt in favor of originals, says, "Men seem not to know their own stock and abilities, but fancy their possessions to be greater, and their abilities less, than they really are." Which is, in effect, saying, that we ought to exert more than we do; and that, on exertion, our probability of success is greater than we conceive.

Nor have I Bacon's opinion only, but his assistance, too, on my side. His mighty mind travelled round the intellectual world, and, with a more than eagle's eye, saw and has pointed out blank spaces or dark spots in it, on which the human mind never shone: some of these have been enlightened since; some are benighted still.

Moreover, so boundless are the bold excursions of the human mind, that, in the vast void beyond real existence, it can call forth shadowy beings and unknown worlds, as numerous, as bright, and, perhaps as lasting, as the stars: such quite-original beauties we may call *paradisaical*,—

*Natos sine semine flores. Ovid.*

When such an ample area for renowned adventure in original attempts lies before us, shall we be as mere leaden pipes, conveying to the present age small streams of excellence from its grand reservoir in antiquity, and those, too, perhaps, mudded in the pass? Originals shine like comets, have no peer in their path, are rivalled by none, and the gaze of all. All other compositions, if they shine at all, shine in clusters, like the stars in the galaxy; where, like bad neighbors, all suffer from all each particular being diminished, and almost lost in the throng.

If thoughts of this nature prevailed,—if ancients and moderns were no longer considered as masters and pupils, but as hard-matched rivals for renown,—then moderns, by the longevity of their labors, might one day become ancients themselves; and old Time, that best weigher of merits, to keep his balance even, might have the golden weight of an Augustan age in both his scales; or, rather, our scale might descend; and antiquity's (as a modern match for it strongly speaks) might kick the beam.

And why not? for, consider,—since an impartial Providence scatters talents indifferently, as through all orders of persons, so through all periods of time;—since a marvellous light, unenjoyed of old, is poured on us by revelation, with larger prospects extending our understanding, with brighter objects enriching our imagination, with an inestimable prize setting our passions on fire, thus strengthening every power that enables composition to shine;—since there has been no fall in man on this side Adam, who left no works, and the works of all other ancients are our auxiliars against themselves, as being perpetual spurs to our ambition, and shining lamps in our path to fame;—since this world is a school, as well for intellectual as moral advance, and the longer human nature is at school, the better scholar it should be;—since, as the moral world expects its glorious millennium, the world intellectual may hope, by the rules of analogy, for some superior degrees of excellence to crown her later scenes; nor may it only hope, but must enjoy them too; for Tully, Quintilian, and all true critics allow, that virtue assists genius, and that the writer will be more able, when better is the man:—all these particulars, I say, considered, why should it seem altogether impossible that heaven's latest editions of the human mind may be the most correct and fair; that the day may come when the moderns may proudly look back on the comparative darkness of former ages, on the children of antiquity, reputed Homer and Demosthenes as the dawn of divine genius, and on Athens as the cradle of infant fame? What a glorious revolution would this make in the rolls of renown?

“What a rant,” say you, “is here!” I partly grant it: yet, consider, my friend, knowledge physical, mathematical, moral, and divine, increases; all arts and sciences are making considerable advance; with them, all the accommodations, ornaments, delights, and glories of human life; and these are new food to the genius of a polite writer; these are as the root, and composition as the flower; and as the root spreads and thrives, shall the flower fail? As well may a flower flourish when the



root is dead. It is prudence to read, genius to relish, glory to surpass, ancient authors; and wisdom, to try our strength in an attempt in which it would be no great dishonor to fail.

Why condemned Maro his admirable epic to the flames? Was it not because his discerning eye saw some length of perfection beyond it? And what he saw, may not others reach? And who bid fairer than our countrymen for that glory? Something new may be expected from Britons particularly; who seem not to be more severed from the rest of mankind by the surrounding sea, than by the current in their veins; and of whom little more appears to be required, in order to give us originals, than a consistency of character, and making their compositions of a piece with their lives.

In<sup>15</sup> polite composition, in natural and mathematical knowledge, we have great originals already: Bacon,<sup>16</sup> Newton, Shakespeare, Milton, have showed us that all the winds cannot blow the British flag farther than an original spirit can convey the British fame. Their names go round the world; and what foreign genius strikes not as they pass? Why should not their posterity embark in the same bold bottom of new enterprise, and hope the same success? Hope it they may; or you must assert that either those originals which we already enjoy were written by angels, or deny that we are men. As Simonides said to Pausanias, reason should say to the writer, "Remember thou art a man." And for a man not to grasp at all which is laudable within his reach, is a dishonor to human nature, and a disobedience to the divine; for as heaven does nothing in vain, its gift of talents implies an injunction of their use.

A friend of mine has obeyed that injunction: he has relied on himself, and with a genius, as well moral as original, (to speak in bold terms,) has cast out evil spirits; has made a convert to virtue of a species of composition once most its foe: as the first Christian emperors expelled demons and dedicated their temples to the living God.

But you, I know, are sparing in your praise of this author: therefore I will speak of one which is sure of your applause. Shakespeare mingled no water with his wine, lowered his genius by no vapid imitation. Shakespeare gave us a Shakespeare, nor could the first in ancient fame have given us more. Shakespeare is not their son, but brother; their equal, and that in spite of all his faults. Think you this too bold?

<sup>15</sup> lives. May our genius shine, and proclaim us in that nobler view!—*minima contentos nocte Britannos.* Virg. And so it does; for in

<sup>16</sup> Boyle,

Consider, in those ancients, what is it the world admires? Not the fewness of their faults, but the number and brightness of their beauties; and if Shakespeare is their equal (as he doubtless is) in that which in them is admired, then is Shakespeare as great as they; and not impotence, but some other cause, must be charged with his defects. When we are setting these great men in competition, what but the comparative size of their genius is the subject of our inquiry? And a giant loses nothing of his size, though he should chance to trip in his race. But it is a compliment to those heroes of antiquity to suppose Shakespeare their equal only in dramatic powers; therefore, though his faults had been greater, the scale would still turn in his favor. There is at least as much genius on the British as on the Grecian stage, though the former is not swept so clean; so clean from violations not only of the dramatic, but moral rule; for an honest heathen, on reading some of our celebrated scenes, might be seriously concerned to see that our obligations to the religion of nature were cancelled by Christianity.

Jonson, in the serious drama, is as much an imitator, as Shakespeare is an original. He was very learned, as Samson was very strong, to his own hurt. Blind to the nature of tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himself under it. We see nothing of Jonson, nor indeed of his admired (but also murdered) ancients; for what shone in the historian, is a cloud on the poet; and *Cataline* might have been a good play, if Sallust had never writ.

Who knows if Shakespeare might not have thought less, if he had read more? Who knows if he might not have labored under the load of Jonson's learning, as Enceladus under Aetna? His mighty genius, indeed, through the most mountainous oppression would have breathed out some of his inextinguishable fire; yet, possibly, he might not have risen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement and delight. Perhaps he was as learned as his dramatic province required; for, whatever other learning he wanted, he was master of two books, unknown to many of the profoundly read, though books which the last conflagration alone can destroy,—the book of nature, and that of man. These he had by heart, and has transcribed many admirable pages of them into his immortal works. These are the fountain-head whence the Castalian streams of original composition flow; and these are often mudded by other waters, though waters, in their distinct channel, most wholesome and pure: as two chemical liquors, separately clear as crystal, grow foul by mixture and offend the sight.

So that he had not only as much learning as his dramatic province required, but, perhaps, as it could safely bear.<sup>17</sup>

Dryden, destitute of Shakespeare's genius, had almost as much learning as Jonson, and, for the buskin, quite as little taste. He was a stranger to the pathos; and by numbers, expression, sentiment, and every other dramatic cheat, strove to make amends for it; as if a saint could make amends for the want of conscience, a soldier for the want of valor, or a vestal of modesty. The noble nature of tragedy disclaims an equivalent: like virtue, it demands the heart; and Dryden had none to give. Let epic poets think; the tragedian's point is rather to feel: such distant things are a tragedian and a poet, that the latter, indulged, destroys the former. Look on *Barnwell* and *Essex*, and see how, as to these distant characters, Dryden excels and is excelled. But the strongest demonstration of his no-taste for the buskin are his tragedies fringed with rime; which, in epic poetry, is a sore disease, in the tragic, absolute death. To Dryden's enormity, Pope's was a light offence. As lacemen are foes to mourning, these two authors, rich in rime, were no great friends to those solemn ornaments which the nature of their works required.

"Must rime, then," say you, "be banished?" I wish the nature of our language could bear its entire expulsion; but our lesser poetry stands in need of a toleration for it: it raises that, but it sinks<sup>18</sup> the great; as spangles adorn children, but expose men. Prince Henry bespangled all over in his eyelet-hole suit with glittering pins, and an Achilles, or an Almanzor, in this Gothic array, are very much on a level, as to the majesty of the poet and the prince. Dryden had a great, but a general, capacity; and as for a general genius, there is no such thing in nature. A genius implies the rays of the mind concentered, and determined to some particular point: when they are scattered widely, they act feebly and strike not with sufficient force to fire or dissolve the heart. As what comes from the writer's heart reaches ours; so what comes from his head sets our brains at work and our hearts at ease. It makes a circle of thoughtful critics, not of distressed patients; and a passive audience is what tragedy requires. Applause is not to be given, but extorted; and the silent lapse of a single tear does the writer more honor than the rattling thunder of a thousand hands. Applauding hands and dry eyes (which during Dryden's theatrical reign often met) are a satire on the writer's talent and the spectator's taste. When by such judges the

<sup>17</sup> bear. If Milton had spared some of his learning, his muse would have gained more glory than he would have lost by it.

<sup>18</sup> but sinks

laurel is blindly given, and by such a poet proudly received, they resemble an intoxicated host and his tasteless guests over some sparkling adulteration, commending their champagne. But Dryden has his glory, though not on the stage. What an inimitable original is his ode! A small one, indeed, but of the first lustre, and without a flaw; and, amid the brightest boasts of antiquity, it may find a foil.

Among the brightest of the moderns, Mr. Addison must take his place. Who does not approach his character with great respect? They who refuse to close with the public in his praise, refuse at their peril. But, if men will be fond of their own opinions, some hazard must be run. He had, what Dryden and Jonson wanted, a warm and feeling heart; but, being of a grave and bashful nature, through a philosophic reserve and a sort of moral prudery, he concealed it where he should have let loose all his fire, and have showed the most tender sensibilities of heart. At his celebrated "Cato" few tears are shed but Cato's own; which, indeed, are truly great, but unaffecting, except to the noble few who love their country better than themselves. The bulk of mankind want virtue enough to be touched by them. His strength of genius has reared up one glorious image, more lofty and truly golden than that in the plains of Dura, for cool admiration to gaze at, and warm patriotism (how rare!) to worship; while those two throbbing pulses of the drama, by which alone it is shown to live, terror and pity, neglected through the whole, leave our unmolested hearts at perfect peace. Thus the poet, like his hero, through mistaken excellence, and virtue overstrained, becomes a sort of suicide; and that which is most dramatic in the drama, dies. All his charms of poetry are but as funeral flowers, which adorn; all his noble sentiments but as rich spices, which embalm, the tragedy deceased.

Of tragedy, pathos is not only the life and soul, but the soul inextinguishable: it charms us through a thousand faults. Decorations, which in this author abound, though they might immortalize other poesy, are the *splendida peccata* which damn the drama; while, on the contrary, the murder of all other beauties is a venial sin, nor plucks the laurel from the tragedian's brow.<sup>19</sup>

Socrates frequented the plays of Euripides; and what living Socrates would decline the theatre at the representation of *Cato*? Tully's assassins found him in his litter reading the *Medea* of the Grecian poet to prepare himself for death. Part of *Cato* might be read to the

<sup>19</sup> brow. Was it otherwise, Shakespeare himself would run some hazard of losing his crown.

same end. In the weight and dignity of moral reflection, Addison resembles that poet who was called "the dramatic philosopher"; and is himself, as he says of *Cato*, "ambitiously sententious." But as to the singular talent, so remarkable in Euripides, at melting down hearts into the tender streams of grief and pity, there the resemblance fails. His beauties sparkle, but do not warm; they sparkle as stars in a frosty night. There is, indeed, a constellation in his play; there is the philosopher, patriot, orator, and poet; but where is the tragedian? And, if that is wanting,

Cur in theatrum, Cato severe, venisti? Mart.

And, when I recollect what passed between him and Dryden in relation to this drama, I must add the next line,—

An ideo tantum veneras, ut exires?

For, when Addison was a student at Oxford, he sent up his play to his friend Dryden, as a proper person to recommend it to the theatre, if it deserved it; who returned it with very great commendation, but with his opinion, that, on the stage, it could not meet with its deserved success. But though the performance was denied the theatre, it brought its author on the public stage of life. For persons in power inquiring soon after of the head of his college for a youth of parts, Addison was recommended, and readily received, by means of the great reputation which Dryden had just then spread of him above.

There is this similitude between the poet and the play: as this is more fit for the closet than the stage, so that shone brighter in private conversation than on the public scene. They both had a sort of local excellency, as the heathen gods a local divinity; beyond such a bound they unadmired, and these unadored. This puts me in mind of Plato, who denied Homer to the public; that Homer which, when in his closet, was rarely out of his hand. Thus, though *Cato* is not calculated to signalize himself in the warm emotions of the theatre, yet we find him a most amiable companion in our calmer delights of recess.

Notwithstanding what has been offered, this, in many views, is an exquisite piece. But there is so much more of art than nature in it, that I can scarce forbear calling it an exquisite piece of statuary,

"Where the smooth chisel all its skill has shown,

To soften into flesh the rugged stone."—Addison.

That is, where art has taken great pains to labor undramatic matter into dramatic life; which is impossible. However, as it is, like Pygmalion, we cannot but fall in love with it, and wish it was alive. How would a Shakespeare or an Otway have answered our wishes? They

would have outdone Prometheus, and, with their heavenly fire, have given him not only life, but immortality. At their dramas (such is the force of nature) the poet is out of sight, quite hid behind his Venus, never thought of till the curtain falls. Art brings our Author forward, he stands before his piece; splendidly, indeed, but unfortunately; for the writer must be forgotten by his audience during the representation, if for ages he would be remembered by posterity. In the theatre, as in life, delusion is the charm; and we are undelighted the first moment we are undeceived. Such demonstration have we that the theatre is not yet opened in which solid happiness can be found by man; because none are more than comparatively good; and folly has a corner in the heart of the wise.

A genius fond of ornament should not be wedded to the tragic muse, which is in mourning: we want not to be diverted at an entertainment where our greatest pleasure arises from the depth of our concern. But whence (by the way) this odd generation of pleasure from pain? The movement of our melancholy passions is pleasant when we ourselves are safe; we love to be at once miserable and unhurt: so are we made; and so made, perhaps, to show us the Divine goodness; to show that none of our passions were designed to give us pain, except when being pained is for our advantage on the whole; which is evident from this instance, in which we see that passions the most painful administer greatly, sometimes, to our delight.<sup>20</sup>

To close our thoughts on *Cato*: he who sees not much beauty in it, has no taste for poetry; he who sees nothing else, has no taste for the stage. While it justifies censure, it extorts applause. It is much to be admired, but little to be felt. Had it not been a tragedy, it had been immortal; as it is a tragedy, its uncommon fate somewhat resembles his who, for conquering gloriously, was condemned to die. Both shone, but shone fatally; because in breach of their respective laws, the laws of the drama, and the laws of arms. But how rich in reputation must that author be who can spare a *Cato* without feeling the loss!

That loss by our author would scarce be felt; it would be but dropping a single feather from a wing that mounts him above his contemporaries. He has a more refined, decent, judicious, and extensive genius than Pope or Swift. To distinguish this triumvirate from each other, and, like Newton, to discover the different colors in these genuine and meridian rays of literary light, Swift is a singular wit, Pope a correct poet,

<sup>20</sup> delight. Since great names have accounted otherwise for this particular, I wish this solution, though to me probable, may not prove a mistake.

Addison a great author. Swift looked on wit as the *jus divinum* to dominion and sway in the world, and considered as usurpation all power that was lodged in persons of less sparkling understandings. This inclined him to tyranny in wit. Pope was somewhat of his opinion, but was for softening tyranny into lawful monarchy; yet were there some acts of severity in his reign. Addison's crown was elective: he reigned by the public voice:

—Volentes

Per populos dat jura viamque affectat Olympo. Virg.

But as good books are the medicine of the mind, if we should dethrone these authors and consider them not in their royal, but their medicinal capacity, might it not then be said—that Addison prescribed a wholesome and pleasant regimen which was universally relished and did much good;—that Pope preferred a purgative of satire which, though wholesome, was too painful in its operation—and that Swift insisted on a large dose of ipecacuanha, which, though readily swallowed from the fame of the physician, yet, if the patient had any delicacy of taste, he threw up the remedy instead of the disease?

Addison wrote little in verse, much in sweet, elegant, Virgilian prose; so let me call it, since Longinus calls Herodotus most Homeric, and Thucydides is said to have formed his style on Pindar. Addison's compositions are built with the finest materials, in the taste of the ancients, and (to speak his own language) on truly classic ground; and though they are the delight of the present age, yet am I persuaded that they will receive more justice from posterity. I never read him but I am struck with such a disheartening idea of perfection, that I drop my pen. And, indeed, far superior writers should forget his compositions, if they would be greatly pleased with their own.<sup>21</sup>

But you say that you know his value already.—You know, indeed, the value of his writings, and close with the world in thinking them immortal; but I believe, you know not that his name would have deserved immortality though he had never written; and that by a better

<sup>21</sup> And yet, (perhaps you have not observed it,) what is the common language of the world, and even of his admirers, concerning him? They call him an elegant writer. That elegance which shines on the surface of his compositions, seems to dazzle their understanding, and render it a little blind to the depth of sentiment which lies beneath. Thus (hard fate!) he loses reputation with them by doubling his title to it. On subjects the most interesting and important, no author of his age has written with greater, I had almost said, with equal, weight. And they who commend him for his elegance, pay him a sort of compliment, by their abstemious praise, as they would pay to Lucretia, if they should commend her only for her beauty.

title than pen can give. You know, too, that his life was amiable; but, perhaps, you are still to learn that his death was triumphant. That is a glory granted to very few; and the paternal hand of Providence, which sometimes snatches home its beloved children in a moment, must convince us that it is a glory of no great consequence to the dying individual; that, when it is granted, it is granted chiefly for the sake of the surviving world, which may profit by his pious example, to whom is indulged the strength and opportunity to make his virtue shine out brightest at the point of death. And here permit me to take notice that the world will probably profit more by a pious example of lay-extraction, than by one born of the church; the latter being usually taxed with an abatement of influence by the bulk of mankind: therefore, to smother a bright example of this superior good influence, may be reputed a sort of murder injurious to the living and unjust to the dead.

Such an example have we in Addison; which, though hitherto suppressed, yet, when once known, is insuppressible, of a nature too rare, too striking to be forgotten. For, after a long and manly, but vain, struggle with his distemper, he dismissed his physicians, and with them all hopes of life. But with his hopes of life he dismissed not his concern for the living, but sent for a youth nearly related and finely accomplished, but<sup>22</sup> not above being the better for good impressions from a dying friend. He came; but, life now glimmering in the socket, the dying friend was silent. After a decent and proper pause, the youth said, "Dear sir, you sent for me: I believe and I hope that you have some commands; I shall hold them most sacred." May distant ages not only hear, but feel, the reply! Forcibly grasping the youth's hand, he softly said, "See in what peace a Christian can die!" He spoke with difficulty and soon expired. Through grace Divine, how great is man! Through Divine mercy, how stingless death! Who would not thus expire?

What an inestimable legacy were those few dying words to the youth beloved! What a glorious supplement to his own valuable fragment on the truth of Christianity! What a full demonstration, that his fancy could not feign beyond what his virtue could reach! For when he would strike us most strongly with the grandeur of the Roman magnanimity, his dying hero is ennobled with this sublime sentiment:—

While yet I live, let me not live in vain. Cato.

But how much more sublime is that sentiment when realized in life; when dispelling the languors, and appeasing the pains of a last hour,

<sup>22</sup> yet



and brightening with illustrious action the dark avenue and all-awful confines of an eternity! When his soul scarce animated his body, strong faith and ardent charity animated his soul into divine ambition of saving more than his own. It is for our honor and our advantage to hold him high in our esteem; for the better men are, the more they will admire him; and the more they admire him, the better will they be.

By undrawing the long-closed curtain of his death-bed, have I not showed you a stranger in him whom you knew so well? Is not this of your favorite author,

—Notâ major imago?— Virg.

His compositions are but a noble preface, the grand work is his death: that is a work which is read in heaven. How has it joined the final approbation of angels to the previous applause of men! How gloriously has he opened a splendid path, through fame immortal, into eternal peace! How has he given religion to triumph amidst the ruins of his nature; and, stronger than death, risen higher in virtue when breathing his last!

If all our men of genius had so breathed their last,—if all our men of genius, like him, had been men of genius for eternals,—then had we never been pained by the report of a latter end—O, how unlike to this! But a little to balance our pain, let us consider that such reports as make us at once adore and tremble, are of use, when too many there are who must tremble before they will adore; and who convince us, to our shame, that the surest refuge of our endangered virtue is in the fears and terrors of the disingenuous human heart.

“But reports,” you say, “may be false,” and you farther ask me, “If all reports were true, how came an anecdote of so much honor to human nature as mine to lie so long unknown? What inauspicious planet interposed to lay its lustre under so lasting and so surprising an eclipse?”

The fact is indisputably true; nor are you to rely on me for the truth of it. My report is but a second edition; it was published before, though obscurely, and with a cloud before it. As clouds before the sun are often beautiful, so this of which I speak. How finely pathetic are those two lines which this so solemn and affecting scene inspired!—

“He taught us how to live; and, O, too high

A price for knowledge, taught us how to die.” Tickell.

With truth wrapped in darkness, so sung our oracle to the public, but explained himself to me. He was present at his patron’s death; and that account of it here given, he gave to me before his eyes were dry.

By what means Addison taught us how to die, the poet left to be known by a late and less able hand; but one more zealous for his patron's glory: zealous and impotent, as the poor Egyptian who gathered a few splinters of a broken boat as a funeral-pile for the great Pompey, studious of doing honor to so renowned a name. Yet had not this poor plank (permit me here so to call this imperfect page) been thrown out, the chief article of his patron's glory would probably have been sunk forever, and late ages have received but a fragment of his fame: a fragment glorious indeed, for his genius how bright! But to commend him for composition, though immortal, is distraction now, if there our encomium ends; let us look farther to that concluding scene, which spoke human nature not unrelated to the Divine. To that let us pay the long and large arrear of our greatly posthumous applause.

This you will think a long digression; and justly: if that may be called a digression, which was my chief inducement for writing at all. I had long wished to deliver up to the public this sacred deposit, which by Providence was lodged in my hands; and I entered on the present undertaking partly as an introduction to that which is more worthy to see the light; of which I gave an intimation in the beginning of my letter: for this is the monumental marble there mentioned, to which I promised to conduct you; this is the sepulchral lamp, the long hidden lustre of our accomplished countryman, who now rises, as from his tomb, to receive the regard so greatly due to the dignity of his death: a death to be distinguished by tears of joy; a death which angels beheld with delight.

And shall that which would have shone conspicuous amid the resplendent lights of Christianity's glorious morn, by these dark days be dropped into oblivion? Dropped it is; and dropped by our sacred, august, and ample register of renown, which has entered in its marble memoirs the dim splendor of far inferior worth. Though so lavish of praise, and so talkative of the dead, yet is it silent on a subject which (if any) might have taught its unlettered stones to speak. If powers were not wanting, a monument more durable than those of marble should proudly rise in this ambitious page, to the new and far nobler Addison than that which you and the public have so long and so much admired. Nor this nation only; for it is Europe's Addison, as well as ours; though Europe knows not half his title to her esteem; being as yet unconscious that the dying Addison far outshines her Addison immortal. Would we resemble him? Let us not limit our ambition to the least illustrious part of his character; heads, indeed, are crowned on earth;

but hearts only are crowded in heaven; a truth which, in such an age of authors, should not be forgotten.

It is piously to be hoped that this narrative may have some effect, since all listen when a death-bed speaks; and regard the person departing as an actor of a part which the great Master of the drama has appointed us to perform to-morrow. This was a Roscius on the stage of life; his exit how great! Ye lovers of virtue, *plaudite*; and let us, my friend, ever "remember his end, as well as our own, that we may never do amiss." I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most obliged,

humble servant.

P.S. How far Addison is an original, you will see in my next; where I descend from this consecrated ground into his sublunary praise: and great is the descent, though into noble heights of intellectual power.

## APPENDIX I

### THE IDEAS CONTAINED IN THE "CONJECTURES" COMPARED WITH THEIR PARALLELS FOUND IN EARLIER WRITINGS

In any argument or discussion much of the final impression may depend upon the point of view. Such will be the case at least with the following compilation. A word of explanation by way of preface will therefore be in place.

Nearly every passage in the *Conjectures* that is of literary significance is collated here with a limited number of similar statements made by Young himself or by others before he wrote his *Conjectures*. The similarity in question consists in resemblance or identity as to thought or terminology. In the first group of quotations, for example, Young's claim that he was writing on a new subject, on a subject on which he had not yet seen anything written, is compared with instances where he makes the same claim for his *Night Thoughts* and his *True Estimate of Human Life*, and with various instances where other authors make the same claim for their own or other works. Thus it is made obvious that it was common practice with Young and others before and during his days to recommend literary works by claiming originality for them. In the second group his precept that the pen ought to be employed above all in the "sacred interests of virtue, and real service of mankind" is compared with passages that anticipate it more or less strikingly. The third group of quotations, finally, was collated to show the remarkable resemblance in thought and terminology between the statements made by Young as to genius and originality and certain earlier ones made by other writers. And such parallel passages are quoted in a chronological, but *retrogressive*, order. Thus, a passage from the *Conjectures* is placed closest to those parallels which are most closely related to it as to time and contents.

Out of regard for space and because this study is not meant as a complete history of the origin, development, and spread of each term and idea in question, the reader will find here only a certain portion of the evidence which I have gathered to show where and how Young repeats in his *Conjectures* either better or worse what had been said before by himself or others. The data here given will suffice, however, to show that almost everything that Young says in his treatise was available in quite a number of sources. They tend further to substantiate my view that Young employed his own precept when writing this essay.

According to this precept one should read everything that others have said on one's topic before proceeding to write. These data prove furthermore that the *Conjectures* were not a new phenomenon in literary criticism, and they indicate the sources from which they may have been derived, while it has been pointed out in a preceding chapter that Young had actually read many such writings as are quoted here. It is nevertheless not to be denied that Young may have worked out many of his arguments and conclusions independently of all similar statements already in existence. Whoever wishes to see and judge for himself in this matter, will find the following compilation a convenient aid.

*Conjectures* (p. 43): I begin with *original composition*; and the more willingly, as it seems an original subject to me, who have seen nothing hitherto written on it.

1756: "I do not know whether my poem will have all the qualities requisite to satisfy a reader: but I dare flatter myself, that it will at least be allowed to have the grace of *novelty*." Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 206.

1742: Why doubt me then, the glorious truth to sing,  
Though yet *unsung*, as deem'd perhaps too bold?

Young, Vol. I, p. 59.

1741: I may be looked upon as an original in my way.

Samuel Richardson, Oxf. Dic., vid. *Original*.

1728: The design [speaking of his "True Estimate of Human Life"] is of great consequence, and, I think, new.

Young, Vol. II, p. 323.

1711: My design in this paper is to consider what is properly a great genius, and to throw some thoughts together on so uncommon a subject.

Spectator, No. 160.

1695: I believe the subject [concerning Humor in Comedy] is entirely new, and was never touched upon before.

William Congreve, *Concerning Humor in Comedy*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 251.

1685: 'Tis sufficient to observe that his [Lord Rochester's] poetry, like himself, was all original, and has a stamp so particular, so unlike anything that has been writ before, that, as it disclaimed all servile imitation and copying from others, so neither is it capable, in my opinion, of being copied, any more than the manner of his discourse could be copied.

Robert Wolseley, *Preface to Valentinian*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 8.

1683: Of this treatise, I shall only add, 'tis an original.

D. A. Art of Converse, Pref., Oxf. Dic., vid. *Original*.

1677-79 (?) Whom refin'd Etherge copies not at all,  
But is himself a sheer original.

John Wilmot, *An Allusion to Horace*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 283.

1676: I hate imitation, to do anything like other people. All that know me do me the honor to say, I am an original.

Wycherley, Plain Dealer, Oxf. Dic., vid. *Original*.

*Conjectures* (p. 43): Wit, indeed, however brilliant, should not be permitted to gaze self-enamoured on its useless charms, in that fountain fame, (if so I may call the press,) if beauty is all that it has to boast; but like the first Brutus, it should sacrifice its most darling offspring to the sacred interests of virtue, and real service of mankind.

1744: He that writes popularly and well, does most good; and he that does most good, is the best author. Young, Vol. I, p. 7.

1714: How empty learning, and how vain is art,  
But as it mends the life, and guides the heart!

Young, Vol. I, p. 273.

1712: Besides this great moral, which may be looked upon as the soul of the fable, there are an infinity of under-morals which are to be drawn from the several parts of the poem, and which makes this work more useful and instructive than any other poem in any language. Spectator, No. 369.

1711: Thus beauty and truth are plainly joined with the notion of utility and convenience, even in the apprehension of every ingenious artist, the architect, the statuary, or the painter, . . . What is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable; what is harmonious and proportionable is true; and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good.

Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. II, pp. 268-69.

250 ca.: Now as regards the manifestations of the sublime in literature, in which grandeur is never, as it sometimes is in nature, found apart from utility and advantage, it is fitting to observe, etc. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 135.

*Conjectures* (p. 45): But there are who write with vigor and success to the world's delight and their own renown. These are the glorious fruits where genius prevails. The mind of a man of genius is a fertile and pleasant field, pleasant as Elysium and fertile as Tempe; it enjoys a perpetual spring. Of that spring originals are the fairest flowers; imitations are of quicker growth, but fainter bloom.

1715-25: Our author's [Homer's] work is a wild paradise where, if we cannot see all the beauties so distinctly as in an ordered garden, it is only because the number of them is infinitely greater. It is like a copious nursery which contains the seeds and first productions of every kind out of which those who followed him have but selected some particular plants, each according to his fancy, to cultivate and beautify. If some things are too luxuriant, it is owing to the richness of the soil; and if others are not arrived to perfection or maturity, it is only because they are over-run and oppressed by those of a stronger nature. Pope, *Homer*, Preface.

1711: The genius in both these classes of authors may be equally great, but shows itself after a different manner. In the first it is like a rich soil in a happy climate, that produces a whole wilderness of noble plants, rising in a thousand beautiful landscapes, without any certain order or regularity. In the other it is the same rich soil under the same happy climate, that has been laid out in walks and parterres, and cut into shape and beauty by the skill of the gardener. Addison, *Spect.* No. 160.

1711: This the miscellaneous manner of writing, it must be owned, has happily effected.—From every field, from every hedge or hillock, we now gather as delicious fruits and fragrant flowers as of old from the richest and best cultivated gardens.

Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. II, p. 158.

1591: I presume to offer to your Highness the first fruit of the little garden of my slender skill. It hath been the longer in growing, and is less worthy the gathering, because my ground is barren and too cold for such dainty Italian fruits.

John Harrington, *Orlando Furioso*, Introduction.

*Conjectures* (p. 45): Originals are, and ought to be, great favorites, for they are great benefactors; they extend the republic of letters, and add a new province to its dominion:

1709: And forasmuch as this globe is not trodden upon by mere drudges of business only, but that men of spirit and genius are justly to be esteemed as considerable agents in it, etc.

Steele, *Taller*, No. I.

1679: Bossu, the best of modern critics, answers thus in general: that all excellent arts, and particularly that of poetry, have been invented and brought to perfection by men of transcendent genius.

Dryden, Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*.

1620: Now the true and lawful goal of the sciences is none other than this: that human life be endowed with new discoveries and powers.

Bacon, *Novum Organum*, Vol. I, LXXXI.

*Conjectures* (p. 45): The pen of an original writer, like Armida's wand, out of a barren waste calls a blooming spring.

1754: Let these gentle hints, like the touch of a magic wand, make you shrink from your vernal bloom, and wither at least to the decencies of fourscore.

Young, Vol. II, p. 451.

*Conjectures* (p. 46): But if an original, by being as excellent as new, adds admiration to surprise, then are we at the writer's mercy; on the strong wing of his imagination we are snatched from Britain to Italy, from climate to climate, from pleasure to pleasure; we have no home, no thought of our own; till the magician drops his pen: and then falling down into ourselves, we awake to flat realities, lamenting the change, like the beggar who dreamt himself a prince.

1756: Astonishment, as I have said, is the effect of the sublime in the highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence, and respect.

Burke, *Sublime and Beautiful*, p. 130.

1754: The world is worn out to us.—Where are its formerly sweet delusions, its airy castles, and glittering spires?—shall not the dissolved enchantment set the captive free?

Young, Vol. II, p. 501.

1753: The poet [Shakespeare] is a more powerful magician than his own Prospero: we are transported into fairyland; we are wrapt in a delicious dream, from which it is misery to be disturbed; all around is enchantment!

*The Adventurer*, No. 93.

1739: 'Tis difficult for us to withhold our assent from what is pointed out to us in all the colors of eloquence; and the vivacity produced by the fancy is in many cases greater than that which arises from custom and experience. We are hurried away by the lively imagination of our author or companion; and even he himself is often a victim to his own fire and genius. Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*, p. 420.

1715-25: It is to the strength of this amazing invention we are to attribute that unequalled fire and rapture, which is so forcible in Homer that no man of a true poetical spirit is master of himself while he reads him. What he writes is of the most animated nature imaginable: everything moves, everything lives, and is put in action; . . . the reader is hurried out of himself by the force of the poet's imagination and turns in one place to a hearer, and in another to a spectator. Pope, Preface to *Homer*.

1712: Milton . . . concludes his description with a circumstance which is altogether new, and imagined with the greatest strength of fancy. Addison, *Spect.* No. 327.

1712: . . . described with the utmost flights of human imagination. Addison, *Spectator*, No. 333.

1712: If I were to name a poet that is a perfect master in all these arts of working on the imagination, I think Milton may pass for one. *Spectator*, No. 417.

1712: In short, our souls are at present delightfully lost and bewildered in a pleasing delusion, and we walk about like the enchanted hero of a romance, who sees beautiful castles, woods, and meadows; and at the same time hears the warbling of birds and the purling of streams; but upon the finishing of some secret spell, the fantastic scene breaks up, and the disconsolate knight finds himself on a barren heath, or in a solitary desert. Addison, *Spect.* No. 413.

1674: Imagining is, in itself, the very height and life of poetry. It is, as Longinus describes it, a discourse which, by a kind of enthusiasm, or extraordinary emotion of the soul, makes it seem to us that we behold those things which the poet paints, so as to be pleased with them, and to admire them.

Dryden, *The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License*, p. 186.

250 ca.: Images, moreover, contribute greatly, my young friend, to dignity, elevation, and power as a pleader. In this sense some call them mental representations. In a general way the name of image or imagination is applied to every idea of the mind, in whatsoever form it presents itself, which gives birth to speech. But at the present day the word is predominantly used in cases where, carried away by enthusiasm and passion, you think you see what you describe, and you place it before the eyes of your hearers. Further, you will be aware of the fact that an image has one purpose with the orators and another with the poets, and that the design of the poetical image is enthrallment, of the rhetorical-vivid description. Both, however, seek to stir the passions and the emotions. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 85.

*Conjectures* (p. 47): So few are our originals, that, if all other books were to be burnt, the lettered world would resemble some metropolis in flames, where a few incombustible buildings, a fortress, temple, or tower, lift their heads, in melancholy grandeur, amid the mighty ruin.

1753: The number of original writers, of writers who discover any traces of native thought, or views of new expression, is found to be extremely small, in every branch



of literature. Few possess ability or courage to think for themselves, to trust to their own powers, to rely on their own stock; and, therefore, the generality creeps tamely and cautiously in the track of their predecessors. The quintessence of the largest libraries might be reduced to the compass of a few volumes, if all the useless repetitions, and acknowledged truths were to be omitted in this process of chemical criticism. A learned Frenchman informs us, that he intended to compile a treatise *περὶ τῶν ἀπαρῶν ἐληγμένων*, "concerning things which had been said but once," which I fancy would have been contained in a small pamphlet.

*The Adventurer*, No. 63.

*Conjectures* (p. 48): "Must we then," you say, "not imitate ancient authors?" Imitate them, by all means; but imitate aright. He that imitates the divine Iliad does not imitate Homer; but he who takes the same method which Homer took for arriving at a capacity of accomplishing a work so great.

1729: No man can be like Pindar by imitating any of his particular works, any more than like Raphael by copying the Cartoons. The genius and spirit of such great men must be collected from the whole; and when thus we are possessed of it, we must exert its energy in subjects and designs of our own. Nothing is so un-Pindarical as following Pindar on foot. Pindar is an original; and *he* must be so, too, who would be like Pindar in that which is his greatest praise. Nothing so unlike as a close copy and a noble original.

Young, Vol. II, p. 2.

1728: And we should rather imitate the example of the ancients in the general motives and fundamental methods of their working, than in their works themselves. This is a distinction, I think, not hitherto made, and a distinction of consequence. For the first may make us their equals; the second must pronounce us their inferiors even in our utmost success.

Young, Vol. I, p. 418.

1693: I take imitation of an author, in their [Durham's and Cowley's] sense, to be an endeavor of a later poet to write like one who has written before him, on the same subject; that is, not to translate his words, or to be confined to his sense, but only to set him as a pattern, and to write, as he supposes that author would have done, had he lived in our age, and in our country.

Dryden, Preface to the Translation of Ovid's Epistles, p. 239.

250 ca.: Accordingly it is well that we ourselves also, when elaborating anything which requires lofty expression and elevated conception, should shape some idea in our minds as to how perchance Homer would have said this very thing, or how it would have been raised to the sublime by Plato or Demosthenes or by the historian Thucydides. For those personages, presenting themselves to us and inflaming our ardor and as it were illuminating our path, will carry our minds in a mysterious way to the high standards of sublimity which are imaged within us. Still more effectual will it be to suggest this question to our thoughts, 'What sort of hearing would Homer, had he been present, or Demosthenes have given to this or that, when said by me, or how would they have been affected by the other?'

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 83.

*Conjectures* (p. 48): All eminence, and distinction, lies out of the beaten road; excursion and deviation are necessary to find it; if like poor Gulliver . . . you fall not into a ditch in your way to glory.

1728: It holds true in the province of writing, as in war, "The more danger, the more honor." It must be very enterprising, it must, in Shakespeare's style, have "hair-breadth 'scapes" and often tread the very brink of error. Young, Vol. I, p. 416.

*Conjectures* (p. 49): Genius is a master-workman, learning is but an instrument;—for what, for the most part, mean we by genius, but the power of accomplishing great things without the means generally reputed necessary to that end? A *genius* differs from a *good understanding*, as a magician from a good architect; that raises his structure by means invisible; this by the skilful use of common tools. Hence genius has ever been supposed to partake of something divine. *Nemo unquam vir magnus fuit, sine aliquo afflatu divino.*

1730: For A his magic pen evokes an O,  
And turns the tide of Europe on the foe.

Young, Vol. II, p. 36.

1712: But when we are in the *Metamorphoses*, we are walking on enchanted ground, and see nothing but scenes of magic lying round us. Addison, *Spect.* No. 417.

1711: 'Tis remarkable that in the politest of all nations the writings looked upon as most sacred were those of their great poets, whose works, indeed, were truly divine in respect of art and the perfection of their frame and composition.—Even the philosophers who criticised them with most security were not their least admirers, when they ascribed to them that divine inspiration or sublime enthusiasm.

Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. II, pp. 298 f.

1690: From this ["a certain noble and vital heat of temper—that celestial fire"] arises that elevation of genius which can never be produced by any art or study, by pains or by industry, which cannot be taught by precepts or examples, and therefore is agreed by all to be the pure and free gift of heaven or of nature; and to be a fire kindled out of some hidden spark of the very first conception.

Sir William Temple, *Of Poetry*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 80.

1675: I pitch upon one faculty first which, nor more by chance than inclination, falls out to that of the poet's, a science certainly of all others the most noble and exalted, and not unworthily termed divine, since the hight of poetical rapture hath ever been accounted little less than divine inspiration.

Edward Phillips, *Theatrum Poetarum*, Preface.

1655: Those crude and rude orators of the old time . . . were wont to say: Deum tunc affuisse: that is that God assisted them. Casaubon, *Enthusiasm*, p. 187.

1655: So much for the first kind of *inspired poets*, whom Scaliger doth call *θεο-πνεύστος*. Casaubon, *Enthusiasm*, p. 205.

*Conjectures* (p. 49 f.): Learning, destitute of this superior aid, is fond and proud of what has cost it much pains; it is a great lover of rules, and boaster of famed examples: As beauties less perfect, who owe half their charms to cautious art, learning inveighs against natural, unstudied

graces, and small harmless indecorums, and sets rigid bounds to that liberty to which genius often owes its supreme glory.

1754: Few poets appear to have composed with greater rapidity than Spenser. Hurried away by the impetuosity of imagination, he frequently cannot find time to attend to the niceties of construction; . . . A review of these faults, which flow, perhaps, from that cause which produces his greatest beauties, will tend to explain many passages in particular, and to bring us acquainted with his manner in general.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. I, p. 312.

1754: But it is absurd to think of judging either Ariosto or Spenser by precepts which they did not attend to. We who live in the days of writing by rule, are apt to try every composition by those laws which we have been taught to think the sole criterion of excellence. . . . Spenser, and the same may be said of Ariosto, did not live in an age of planning. His poetry is the careless exuberance of a warm imagination and a strong sensibility. It was his business to engage the fancy, and to interest the attention by bold and striking images, in the formation and disposition of which little labor or art was applied. The various and the marvelous were the chief sources of delight. Hence we find our author ransacking alike the regions of reality and romance, of truth and fiction, to find the proper decoration and furniture for his fairy structure.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. I, pp. 21 f.

1754: A poetry succeeded, in which imagination gave way to correctness, sublimity of description, to delicacy of sentiment, and majestic imagery to conceit and epigram. Poets began now to be more attentive to words than to things and objects. The nicer beauties of happy expression were preferred to the daring strokes of great conception.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. II, pp. 105 f.

1728: And, indeed, this may be said in general,—that great subjects are above being nice; that dignity and spirit ever suffer from scrupulous exactness; and that the minuter cares effeminate a composition. Great masters of poetry, painting, and statuary, in their nobler works, have even affected the contrary; and justly; for a truly masculine air partakes more of the negligent than of the neat, both in writings and in life: *Grandis oratio habet majestatis suae pondus*. A poem like a criminal, under too severe correction, may lose all its spirit and expire.

Young, Vol. I, p. 419.

1727: It is not unlikely, it may be expected, that in an introduction to a collection of poems of a various kind . . . I should say something of the maxims and rules, in general, of poetry. . . . All the ancients, or the moderns copying after them, have written on this scheme, is no more than a set of very obvious thoughts and observations, which every man of good sense naturally knows without being taught, and which never made a good poet, nor mended a bad one. . . . Those observations or rules were primarily formed upon and designed to serve only as comments to the works of certain great authors, who composed those works without any such help; the mighty originals from whence they were drawn were produced without them; and unluckily for all rules, it has commonly happened since, that those writers have succeeded the worst who have pretended to have been most assisted by them.

Leonard Welsted, *A Dissertation*, p. 16.

1712: If we consider the works of nature and art, as they are qualified to entertain the imagination, we shall find the last very defective, in comparison of the former.

. . . There is something more bold and masterly in the rough, careless strokes of nature than in the nice touches and embellishments of art.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 414.

1712: There is sometimes a greater judgment shown in deviating from the rules of art than in adhering to them; and . . . there is more beauty in the works of a great genius who is ignorant of all the rules of art, than in the works of a little genius who not only knows, but scrupulously observes them.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 592.

1711: There appears something nobly wild and extravagant in these great natural geniuses that is infinitely more beautiful than all the turn and polishing of what the French call a *bel esprit*, by which they would express a genius refined by conversation, reflection, and the reading of the most polite authors.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 160.

1711: Some beauties yet no precepts can declare.

.....  
 Music resembles poetry; in each  
 Are nameless graces which no methods teach,  
 And which a master hand alone can reach.  
 .....  
 Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,  
 And rise to faults true critics dare not mend;  
 From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,  
 And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,  
 Which, without passing through the judgment, gains  
 The heart, and all its end at once attains.

Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, p. 42 f.

1690: After all, the utmost that can be achieved or, I think, pretended by any rules in this art is but to hinder some men from being very ill poets, but not to make any man a very good one.

Sir William Temple, *Of Poetry*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 84.

1688: What a prodigious difference there is between a work that is beautiful and one that is merely regular and without faults! . . . It is easier for a great genius to attain sublimity and grandeur than to avoid every trifling fault. . . . When the reading of a book elevates the mind, and inspires brave and noble sentiments, seek no other rule by which to judge it; it is good, and made by the hand of a true workman.

La Bruyère, *Caractères Des Ouvrages de l'Esprit*, Spingarn, Intro., p. XCVIII.

*Conjectures* (p. 50): Rules, like crutches, are a needful aid to the lame, though an impediment to the strong. A Homer casts them away; and like his Achilles, *Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat*, by native force of mind.

1754: Spenser's native force of invention would not suffer him to pursue the letter of a prescribed fiction with scrupulous observation and servile regularity.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. I, p. 93.

1698: Elegance of thought is what we commonly call wit, which adds to propriety, beauty, and pleases our fancy, while propriety entertains our judgment. This depends so much on genius, that 'tis impossible to teach it by rules. . . . to attend to a great

many rules whilst you are writing, is the way to make your style stiff and constrained, whereas elegance consists very much in a genteel ease and freedom of expression.

John Hughes, *Style*, Vol. 1, p. 251.

*Conjectures* (p. 50): There is something in poetry beyond prose-reason; there are mysteries in it not to be explained, but admired.

1739: Besides all these qualities which render a person lovely or valuable, there is also a certain je-ne-sais-quoi of agreeable and handsome, that concurs to the same effect. In this case, as in that of wit and eloquence, we must have recourse to a certain sense, which acts without reflexion, and regards not the tendencies of qualities and characters.

Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 366.

*Conjectures* (p. 50): Genius often then deserves most to be praised when it is most sure to be condemned; that, when its excellence, from mounting high, to weak eyes is quite out of sight.

1712: The most exquisite words and finest strokes of an author are those which very often appear the most doubtful and exceptionable to a man who wants a relish for polite learning; and they are these which a sour, undistinguishing critic generally attacks with the greatest violence.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 291.

*Conjectures* (p. 50): Genius, therefore, leaves but the second place, among men of letters, to the learned. It is their merit and ambition to fling light on the works of genius, and point out its charms.

1714: The ancient critics are full of the praises of their contemporaries; they discover beauties which escaped the observation of the vulgar, and very often find out reasons for palliating and excusing such little slips and oversights as were committed in the writings of eminent authors.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 592.

1711: Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find  
Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind.

Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, p. 48 f.

1701: Imperfect, partial, prejudiced critics have judgment enough to discover faults, but want discernment to find out beauties . . . your lordship easily found that he had beauties which overweighed all faults.

John Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry*, preface.

1693: Ill writers are usually the sharpest censors; for they, as the best poet and the best patron said,

When in the full perfecton of decay,  
Turn vinegar, and come again in play.

Thus the corruption of a poet is the generation of a critic; I mean of a critic in the general acceptance of this age; for formerly they were quite another species of men. They were defenders of poets, and commentators on their works; to illustrate obscure beauties; to place some passages in a better light; to redeem others from malicious interpretations; to help out an author's modesty, who is not ostentatious of his wit; and in short, to shield him, etc. . . . Are our auxiliary forces turned our enemies? . . . or, to speak in the most honorable terms of them, are they, from our seconds, become principals against us?

Dryden, Dedication to Translations from Ovid's *Melamorphoses*.

1674: In the first place, I must take leave to tell them, that they wholly mistake the nature of criticism who think its business is principally to find fault. Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well; the chiefest part of which is to observe those excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader. If the design, the conduct, the thoughts, and the expressions of a poem, be generally such as proceed from a true genius of poetry, the critic ought to pass his judgment in favor of the author. 'Tis malicious and unmanly to snarl at the little lapses of a pen, from which Virgil himself stands not exempted. Horace acknowledges, that honest Homer nods sometimes. . . . And Longinus, who was undoubtedly, after Aristotle, the greatest critic amongst the Greeks, in his twenty-seventh chapter περι Ψευδους, has judiciously preferred the sublime genius that sometimes errs, to the meddling or indifferent one, which makes a few faults, but seldom or never rises to any excellence.

Dryden, *The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License*, pp. 179 f.

*Conjectures* (p. 50): A star of the first magnitude among the moderns was Shakespeare; among the ancients, Pindar; who (as Vossius tells us) boasted of his no-learning, calling himself the eagle, for his flight above it. And such genii as these may indeed have much reliance on their own native powers. For genius may be compared to the body's natural strength, learning to the super-induced accoutrements of arms: if the first is equal to the proposed exploit, the latter rather encumbers, than assists; rather retards than promotes, the victory.

1752: With respect to the productions of imagination and wit, a mere determination of the will is not sufficient; there must be a disposition of the mind which no human being can procure, or the work will have the appearance of a forced plant, in the production of which the industry of art has been substituted for the vigor of nature.

*The Adventurer*, No. 2.

1721: Shakespeare was one of the greatest geniuses that the world ever saw for the tragic stage. Though he lay under greater disadvantages than any of his successors, yet had he greater and more genuine beauties than the best and greatest of them. And what makes the brightest glory of his character, those beauties were entirely his own, and owing to the force of his own nature; whereas his faults were owing to his education, and to the age that he lived in.

Dennis, *Letters*, Vol. II, p. 371.

1712: Among the English, Shakespeare has incomparably excelled all others. That noble extravagance of fancy, which he had in so great perfection, thoroughly qualified him to touch this weak superstitious part of his reader's imagination; and made him capable of succeeding, where he had nothing to support him besides the strength of his own genius.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 419.

1693: I confess, there are some men's constitutions of body and mind so vigorous, and well framed by nature, that they need not much assistance from others; but by the strength of their natural genius, they are, from their cradles, carried towards what is excellent; and, by the privilege of their happy constitutions, are able to do wonders.

Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Vol. IX, p. 6.

1690: But after all, I do not know whether the higher flights of wit and knowledge, like those of power and of empire in the world, may not have been made by the pure

native force of spirit or genius in some single men, rather than by any derived strength among them, however increased by succession, and whether they might not have been the achievements of nature, rather than the improvements of art.

Sir William Temple, *On Ancient and Modern Learning*.

*Conjectures* (p. 50 f.): *Sacer nobis inest deus*, says Seneca. With regard to the moral world, conscience, with regard to the intellectual, genius is that god within.

1742-45: Who conscience sent, her sentence will support,  
And God above assert that God in man.

Young, Vol. I, p. 181.

1655: But if a man will make an observation upon words and language, he might further observe that heathens did not only use the word *ardor* to express their heat in this kind; but even the word spirit. So Ovid; At Sacri vates, etc. Sedibus aetheriis spiritus ille venit. And again: Sic ubi mota calent sacro mea pectora thyerso; altior humano spiritus ille malo est. And this spirit is no less than a very God unto him, elsewhere, *Est Deus in nobis*, etc., as afterwards, in its proper place, out of him, or some other of greater authority than he, shall be declared. But we give it place here, because this ardor, heat or spirit, that possesseth orators and poets, yea soldiers and others, was by divers heathens deemed but one and the same, in its nature though working so differently, as hereafter shall be showed. Now on the other side, that *ardor mentis* is sometimes used by Christian writers for *spiritus sanctus*, is observable too.

Casaubon, *Enthusiasm*, p. 65.

1634 (?): Which doth confirm me in my first opinion, that every author has his own genius, directing him by a secret inspiration to that wherein he may most excel.

Sir William Alexander, *Anacrisis*, ed. Spingarn, p. 185.

*Conjectures* (p. 51): Of genius there are two species, an earlier, and a later; or call them infantine, and adult. An adult genius comes out of nature's hand, as Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth, and mature: Shakespeare's genius was of this kind: on the contrary, Swift stumbled at the threshold, and set out for distinction on feeble knees: his was an infantine genius; a genius which, like other infants, must be nursed and educated, or it will come to nought. Learning is its nurse and tutor.

1756: Different geniuses unfold themselves at different periods of life. In some minds the ore is a long time in ripening.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 76.

1711: This second class of great geniuses are those that have formed themselves by rules, and submitted the greatness of their natural talents to the corrections and restraints of art.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 160.

1690: But though invention be the mother of poetry, yet this child is, like all others, born naked, and must be nourished with care, clothed with exactness and elegance, educated with industry, instructed with art, improved by application, corrected with severity, and accomplished with labor and with time, before it arrives at any great perfection or growth.

Sir William Temple, *Of Poetry*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 80.

*Conjectures* (p. 52): Genius is from heaven, learning from man: This sets us above the low and illiterate; that, above the learned, and polite. Learning is borrowed knowledge; genius is knowledge innate, and quite our own. Therefore, as Bacon observes, it may take a nobler name, and be called wisdom; in which sense of wisdom, some are born wise.

1712: It is one of the great beauties of poetry to make hard things intelligible, and to deliver what is abstruse of itself in such easy language as may be understood by ordinary readers: besides, that the knowledge of a poet should rather seem born with him, or inspired, than drawn from books and systems. Addison, *Spect.* No. 297.

1712: It would be in vain to inquire whether the power of imagining things strongly proceeds from any greater perfection in the soul, or from any nicer texture in the brain, of one man than of another. But this is certain that a noble writer should be born with this faculty in its full strength and vigor. Addison, *Spect.* No. 471.

1694: Our age was cultivated thus at length;  
 But what we gained in skill we lost in strength.  
 Our builders were with want of genius curst,  
 . . . . .  
 Time, place, and action may with pains be wrought,  
 But genius must be born, and never can be taught.

John Dryden, *To Congreve, On the Double Dealer*.

1655: But Aristides on the other side, . . . who fancied Gods in every dream, and tells us of so many wonderful cures by nocturnal sights and revelations: he not only of himself particularly, in his *περὶ τῶ παραφθεγμάτων* speaks very positively and peremptorily, as inspired by God, in his orations; but of rhetoric in general, in his *I. contra Platonem*, as positively and confidently maintaineth, not only that it is the gift of God, . . . but also, if right and excellent, that it comes by immediate inspiration, as oracles and prophecies; without study or learning, or so much as nature.

Casaubon, *Enthusiasm*, p. 143.

1655: He [Julius Caesar Scaliger] delivers it at first as out of Plato and Aristotle, that some are born poets; by nature, without art or study, endowed with all parts and faculties necessary to that profession. Others, though born simple and ignorant, yea dull and stupid, to become poets by immediate inspiration. As for matter of inspiration, it is Plato's doctrine, I confess, in more than one place; but disputed and maintained at large in a peculiar dialogue, inscribed by him *Ion, ἢ περὶ Ἰλιάδος* where he doth only dispute that all true poetry is by immediate inspiration; immediate divine inspiration, in the most proper and literal sense; using all the words that the Greek tongue can afford, to express inspiration, and repeating them often: . . . So that Plato, nay God himself, he saith, would not have us doubt but that it is.

Casaubon, *Enthusiasm*, p. 201

1605: This excellent liquor of knowledge, whether it descend from divine inspiration, or spring from human sense, would soon perish and vanish to oblivion, if it were not preserved in books, traditions, conferences, and places appointed, as universities, colleges, and schools for the receipt and comforting of the same.

Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, p. 77.



*Conjectures* (p. 52): In the fairyland of fancy genius may wander wild; there it has a creative power, and may reign arbitrarily over its own empire of chimeras. The wide field of nature also lies open before it, where it may range unconfined, make what discoveries it can, and sport with its infinite objects uncontrolled, as far as visible nature extends, painting them as wantonly as it will: But what painter of the most unbounded and exalted genius can give us the true portrait of a seraph? He can give us only what by his own or others' eyes has been seen; though that indeed infinitely compounded, raised, burlesqued, dishonored, or adorned: In like manner, who can give us divine truth unrevealed? Much less should any presume to set aside divine truth when revealed, as incongruous to their own sagacities.

1756: It has been the lot of many great names, not to have been able to express themselves with beauty and propriety in the fetters of verse, in their respective languages, who have yet manifested the force, fertility, and creative power of a most poetic genius in prose.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, pp. 265 f.

1756: We do not, it would seem, sufficiently attend to the difference there is betwixt a *man of wit*, as a *man of sense*, and a *true poet*. . . . a clear head, and acute understanding, are not sufficient alone, to make a *poet*; . . . it is a creative and glowing imagination, "*acer spiritus ac vis*," and that alone, that can stamp a writer with this exalted and very uncommon character, which so few possess, and of which so few can properly judge.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, Dedication.

1756: The "man of rimes" may be easily found; but the genuine poet, of a lively plastic imagination, the *true maker* or *creator*, is so uncommon a prodigy, that one is almost tempted to the opinion of Sir William Temple, when he says, "of all the numbers of mankind that live within the compass of a thousand years, for one man that is born capable of making a great poet, there may be a thousand born capable of making as great generals, or ministers of state, as the most renowned in story."

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the genius and Writings of Pope*, pp. 108 f.

1754: The author of the *Arte of English Poesy* generally uses *maker* for poet, *ποιητής*, and if we believe Sir J. Harrington, it was that author who first brought this expression, the significance of which is much commended by Sir P. Sidney, and Jonson, into fashion about the age of Queen Elizabeth. "Nor to dispute how high and supernatural the name of *Maker* is, so christened in English, by that unknown godfather that this last year, save one, viz. 1589, set forth a book called the *Arte of English Poesy*." His name is Puttenham.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. II, p. 63.

1754: If there be any poem whose graces please, because they are situated beyond the reach of art, and where the force of faculties of creative imagination delight, because they are unassisted and unrestrained by those of deliberate judgment, it is this. In reading Spenser, if the critic is not satisfied, yet the reader is transported.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. I, pp. 23 f.

1753: It is the peculiar privilege of poetry, . . . to give life and motion to immaterial beings, and form and color, and action, even to abstract ideas. . . . Prosopopoeia, therefore, or personification, conducted with dignity and propriety, may be justly esteemed one of the greatest efforts of the creative power of a warm and lively imagination.  
*The Adventurer*, No. 57.

1753: A few observations on the writings of Shakespeare will not be deemed useless or unentertaining, because he exhibits more numerous examples of excellencies and faults, of every kind, than are perhaps to be discovered in any other author, . . . his characteristic excellencies may possibly be reduced to three general heads: his lively creative imagination; his strokes of nature and passion; and his preservation of the consistency of his characters. . . . Of all the plays of Shakespeare the *Tempest* is the most striking instance of his creative power. He has there given the reins of his boundless imagination, and has carried the romantic, the wonderful, and the wild, to the most pleasing extravagance.  
*The Adventurer*, No. 93.

1753: The description of Eden in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, and the battle of the angels in the sixth, are usually selected as the most striking examples of a florid and vigorous imagination: . . . the following passage in the *Revelations* afforded him a hint from which his creative fancy might have worked up a striking picture.  
*The Adventurer*, No. 101.

1742-45: Fairy field of fiction. Young, Vol. I, p. 68.

1742-45: The visionary mind with gay chimeras, Young, Vol. I, p. 153.

1740: Nommez-moi un esprit créateur sur votre Parnasse; c'est à dire nommez-moi un poète allemand qui ait tiré de son propre fond un ouvrage de quelque réputation.  
 Eleazar Mauvillon, *Letters Francaise et Germaniques*, (London, 1740), p. 363.

1727: . . . What we need is the genius to create in our highly perfected language.  
 Leonard Welsted, *The Perfection of the English Language*, p. 12.

1715-26: Homer is universally allowed to have had the greatest invention of any writer whatever, . . . nor is it a wonder if he has ever been acknowledged the greatest of poets, who most excelled in that which is the very foundation of poetry. It is the invention that in different degrees distinguishes all great geniuses: the utmost stretch of human study, learning, and industry, which masters everything besides, can never attain to this. It furnishes art with all the materials, and without it judgment itself can at best but steal but wisely; for art is only like a prudent steward that lives on managing the riches of nature. Whatever praises may be given to works of judgment, there is not even a single beauty in them to which the invention must not contribute: as in the most regular gardens, art can only reduce the beauties of nature to more regularity, and such a figure which the common eye may better take in, and is therefore more entertained with. And perhaps the reason why common critics are inclined to prefer a judicious and methodical genius to a great and fruitful one, is because they find it easier for themselves to pursue their observations through a uniform and bounded walk of art, than to comprehend the vast and various extent of nature.

Pope, *Homer*, Preface.

1712: Claudian . . . has given full scope to that wildness of imagination which was natural to him.  
 Addison, *Spec.* No. 333.

1712: It is this sense [sight] which furnishes the imagination with its ideas; so that by the pleasures of the imagination or fancy (which I shall use promiscuously) I here mean such as arise from visible objects, either when we have them actually in our view, or when we call up their ideas into our minds by paintings, statues, descriptions, or any the like occasion. We cannot indeed have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entrance through the sight; but we have the power of retaining, altering and compounding those images which we have once received into all the varieties of picture and vision that are the most agreeable to the imagination; for by this faculty a man in a dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with scenes and landscapes more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole compass of nature.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 411.

1712: It is in the power of the imagination, when it is once stocked with particular ideas, to enlarge, compound, and vary them at her own pleasure.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 416.

1712: It is this talent of affecting the imagination, that gives an embellishment to good sense, and makes one man's compositions more agreeable than another's. It sets off all writings in general, but is the very life and highest perfection of poetry. . . . It has something in it like creation; it bestows a kind of existence, and draws up to the reader's view several objects which are not to be found in being. It makes additions to nature, and gives a greater variety to God's works. In a word, it is able to beautify and adorn the most illustrious scenes in the universe, or to fill the mind with more glorious shows and apparitions than can be found in any part of it.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 421.

1709-11: Shakespeare . . . according to his agreeable wildness of imagination.

*Tatler*, No. 111.

1690: There must be a universal genius of great compass as well as great elevation. There must be a spritely imagination or fancy, fertile in a thousand productions, ranging over infinite ground, piercing into every corner, and by the light of that true poetical fire discovering a thousand little bodies or images in the world, and similitudes among them, unseen to common eyes, and which could not be discovered without the rays of that sun.

Sir William Temple, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 81.

1675: A fourth [virtue] is elevation of fancy, which is generally taken for the greatest praise of heroic poetry, and is so when governed by discretion. For men more generally affect and admire fancy than they do either judgment or reason or memory or any other intellectual virtue, and for the pleasantness of it, accounting reason and judgment but for a dull entertainment. For in fancy consisteth the sublimity of a poet, which is the poetical fury which the readers for the most part call for. It flies abroad swiftly to fetch in both matter and words; but if there be no discretion at home to distinguish which are fit to be used and which are not, which decent and which undecent, for persons, times, and places, their delight and grace are lost. But if they be discreetly used, they are greater ornaments of a poem by much than any other.

Thomas Hobbes, *Homer*, preface.

1651: Judgment and fancy may have place in the same man; but by turns; as the end which he aimeth at requireth. As the Israelites in Egypt were sometimes fastened to their labor of making bricks, and other times were ranging abroad to gather straw;

so also may the judgment sometimes be fixed upon one certain consideration, and the fancy at another time wandering about the world. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 712.

1620-35: [Shakespeare] . . . had an excellent phantasy.

Ben Jonson, *Timber, or Discoveries*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. I, p. 19.

1632: Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,

Warble his native wood-notes wild.

Milton, *L'Allegro*.

1620-35: A poet is that which by the Greeks is called, *κατ' ἐξοχήν, ὁ ποιητής*, a maker, . . . from the word *ποιεῖν*, which signifies to make.

Ben Jonson, *Timber, or Discoveries*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. I, p. 50.

1581: Only the poet . . . lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or quite a new form such as never was in nature.

Sidney, *A pol. Poetry*, Oxf. Dic., *Poet*.

*Conjectures* (p. 53): And since copies surpass not their originals, as streams rise not higher than their spring, rarely so high; hence, while arts mechanic are in perpetual progress, and increase, the liberal are in retrogradation, and decay.

1605: For as water will not ascend higher than the level of the first springhead from whence it descended, so knowledge derived from Aristotle, and exempted from liberty of examination, will not rise again higher than the knowledge of Aristotle.

Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, Vol. I, p. 37.

*Conjectures* (p. 54): Born originals, how comes it to pass that we die copies? That meddling ape imitation, as soon as we come to years of indiscretion (so let me speak), snatches the pen, and blots out nature's mark of separation, cancels her kind intention, destroys all mental individuality; the lettered world no longer consists of singulars, it is a medley, a mass; and a hundred books, at bottom, are but one.

1753: It is often charged upon writers that with all their pretensions to genius and discoveries, they do little more than copy one another; and that compositions obruded upon the world with the pomp of novelty, contain only tedious repetitions of common sentiments, or at best exhibit a transposition of known images, and give a new appearance to truth only by some slight difference of dress and decoration. . . . The complaint, therefore, that all topics are pre-occupied, is nothing more than the murmur of ignorance or idleness, by which some discourage others and some themselves: the mutability of mankind will always furnish writers with new images, and the luxuriance of fancy may always embellish them with new decorations.

*The Adventurer*, No. 95.

1685: The most revered authors of antiquity have not been able to escape the conceitedness of essayers, nor Hudibras himself, that admirable original, his little apers, though so artless in their imitations, so unlike and so lifeless are their copies, that it were impossible to guess after what hands they drew, if their vanity did not take care to inform us in the title-page.

Robert Wolesley, *Preface to Valentinian*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 13.

*Conjectures* (p. 55): The modern powers are equal to those before them. . . . Reasons there are why talents may not *appear*, none why they should not *exist*, as much in one period as another. An evocation of vegetable fruits depends on rain, air, and sun; an evocation of genius no less depends on externals. . . . Virgil and Horace owed their divine talents to heaven; their immortal works to men; thank Maecenas and Augustus for them.

1756: Not only inclination, but opportunity and encouragement, a proper subject, or a proper patron, influence the exertion or the suppression of genius.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 76.

1694: Upon the whole matter one may positively say that where anything wherein oratory can only claim a share has been equally cultivated by the moderns as by the ancients, they have equalled them at least, if not outdone them, setting aside any particular graces which might as well be owing to the languages in which they wrote as to the writers themselves.

William Wotton, *Ancient and Modern Learning*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 216.

1622: But while we look back to antiquity, let us not forget our later and modern times (as imagining nature hath heretofore extracted her quintessence and left us the dregs), which produce as fertile wits as perhaps the other; yea, and in our Britain.

Henry Peacham, *Of Poetry*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. I, p. 128.

*Conjectures* (p. 55): Who hath fathomed the mind of man? Its bounds are as unknown as those of the creation; since the birth of which, perhaps, not one has so far exerted as not to leave his possibilities beyond his attainments, his powers beyond his exploits.

1712: It is a remark made by a celebrated French author that *no man ever pushed his capacity as far as it was able to extend*.

*Spect.* No. 554.

*Conjectures* (p. 56): Genius, in this view, is like a dear friend in our company under disguise who, while we are lamenting his absence, drops his mask, striking us at once, with equal surprise and joy. This sensation, which I speak of in a writer, might favor and so promote the fable of poetic inspiration: A poet of a strong imagination and a stronger vanity, on feeling it, might naturally enough realize the world's mere compliment and think himself truly inspired. Which is not improbable, for enthusiasts of all kinds do no less.

1739: They think themselves inspired by God, and are not. But false, imaginary inspiration is enthusiasm. I have often wished that all calm and impartial men would consider what is advanced by another writer in a little dissertation concerning enthusiasm or religious delusion, published about this time.

*Wesley's Journal*, (Nov. 1, 1739).

1718: The enthusiast dreams of nothing but gifts and commissions from heaven. . . . He alone converses with Heaven; he sees God, he is a prophet; he feels the Divine Spirit within him.

*The Free Thinker*, No. 22.

1718: When a heated imagination concurs with a profound ignorance of the nature of God, it immediately erects every production of its own into the divine inspiration. A person thus justified never inquires whether his warm conceptions be right or wrong; nor coolly examines whether he has any reason to believe his instigation from God.

*The Free Thinker*, No. 22.

1718: Enthusiasm, therefore, is a kind of irregular and almost unaccountable madness.

*The Free Thinker*, No. 22.

1711: Enthusiasm is wonderfully powerful and extensive; . . . Nor can divine inspiration, by its outward marks, be easily distinguished from it. For inspiration is a real feeling of the Divine Presence, and enthusiasm a false one. But the passion they raise is much alike.

Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. I, p. 37.

1769: The melancholy madness of poetry, without the inspiration.

Junius, *Letters*, Vol. VII, p. 30.

1655: A heat, a fervent heat, a fire; which powerful orators found in themselves, not at the uttering, though then greatest, but upon another consideration; but in conceiving and composing their speeches; so generally observed and acknowledged, that some have thought that no other art or thing was necessary to make a perfect orator: that heat, that fervent heat, that fire, hath been in the *ignis fatuus*, we say, that hath infatuated many speakers into that opinion of divine inspiration. *Ardor* and *impetus*, are the words by Latin authors to this purpose, *Nulla me ingenii, sed magna vis animi inflamat, ut me ipse non teneam*, saith Cicero of himself.

Casaubon, *Enthusiasm*, p. 163.

1655: Enthusiasm, say I, is either natural or supernatural. By supernatural I understand a true and real possession of some extrinsical superior power, whether divine, or diabolical, producing effects and operations altogether supernatural. . . . By natural enthusiasm I understand an extraordinary, transcendent, but natural fervency, or pregnancy of the soul, spirits, or brain, producing strange effects, apt to be mistaken for supernatural.

Casaubon, *Enthusiasm*, p. 17.

250 ca.: So it is with some of the expressions of Callisthenes which are not sublime but highflown, and still more with those of Cleitarchus, . . . for often when these writers seem to themselves to be inspired they are in no true frenzy (*ὁ βακχεύουσι*) but are simply trifling (*ἀλλὰ παίζουσι*).

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 47.

*Conjectures* (p. 56 f.): Know thyself . . . dive deep into thy bosom; learn the depth, extent, bias, and full fort of thy mind; contract full intimacy with the stranger within thee; excite and cherish every spark of intellectual light and heat, however smothered under former negligence, or scattered through the dull, dark mass of common thoughts; and collecting them into a body, let thy genius rise (if a genius thou hast) as the sun from chaos.

1754: A label inscribed, as was the temple of Apollo, with *Γνώθι σεαυτόν*.

Young, Vol. II, p. 420.

1742-45: Thyself, first, know; then love.

Young, Vol. I, p. 172.

1711: The greater danger in these latter kind of geniuses is, lest they cramp their own abilities too much by imitation, and form themselves altogether upon models, without giving the full play to their own natural parts. Addison, *Spect.* No. 160.

1609: For men ought to take an impartial view of their own abilities and virtues; and again of their wants and impediments; accounting these with the most, and those other with the least. Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, p. 234.

*Conjectures* (p. 57): This is the difference between those two luminaries in literature, the well-accomplished scholar and the divinely-inspired enthusiast; the first is as the bright morning-star; the second as the rising sun.

1753: Every affection of the human soul, while it rages with violence, is a momentary frenzy. When, therefore, a poet is able, by the force of genius, or rather of imagination to conceive any emotion of the mind so perfectly as to transfer to his own feelings the instinctive passion of another, and, agreeably to the nature of the subject, to express it in all its vigor; such a one, according to a common mode of speaking, may be said to possess the true poetic enthusiasm, or, as the ancients would have expressed it, "to be inspired; full of the God." Aristoteles expresses it *μανικός*, insane; Plato *ἔκφρονα*, out of their common senses; *ἐνθεον*, inspired by a God; *ἐνθουσιάζοντα*, enthusiastic. Lowth, *Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 177 ff.

1735: Here it is that our author's genius shines in its full lustre. . . . Though he enjoyed all that fire of imagination and divine enthusiasm for which some of the ancient poets are so deservedly admired, yet did his fancy never run away with his reason, but was always guided by a superior judgment.

William Duncombe, in his preface to the poems of John Hughes.

1712: The Morning Hymn [in *Paradise Lost*] is written in imitation of one of those Psalms where, in the overflowings of gratitude and praise, the Psalmist calls not only upon the angels, but upon the most conspicuous parts of the inanimated creation to join with him in extolling their common maker. Invocations of this nature fill the mind with glorious ideas of God's works, and awaken that divine enthusiasm which is so natural to devotion. *Spectator*, No. 327.

1711: Aut insanit homo, aut versus facit. (The man is either raving or composing. Hor. Sat., II, VII, 118.) Composing and raving must necessarily, we see, bear a resemblance. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. I, p. 108.

1655: I believe Aristotle, here quoted by Seneca, that all transcendent wits are subject to some mixture: neither do I believe that ever any great work, that was a fruit of the brain, and that begot admiration, was achieved, but was also the fruit of some natural enthusiasm. Casaubon, *Enthusiasm*, p. 145.

*Conjectures* (p. 57): The writer who neglects those two rules above ["Know thyself!"—"Reverence thyself!"] will never stand alone; he makes one of a group, and thinks in wretched unanimity with the throng; incumbered with the notions of others, and impoverished by their abundance, he conceives not the least embryo of new thought; opens not the least vista through the gloom of ordinary writers into the bright

walks of rare imagination, and singular design; while the true genius is crossing all public roads into fresh, untrodden ground.

1756: Bacon in his *Novum Organum*, divides the human genius into two sorts: Men of dry distinct heads, cool imaginations, and keen application. . . . The second sort of men, of warm fancies, elevated thought, and wide knowledge; they instantly perceive the resemblances of things, and are poets, or masters in science, invent arts, and strike out new light wherever they carry their views.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 115.

1754: For however monstrous and unnatural these compositions may appear to this age of reason and refinement, they merit more attention than the world is willing to bestow. . . . Above all, such are their terrible graces of magic and enchantment, so magnificently marvelous are their fictions and failings, that they contribute in a wonderful degree, to rouse and invigorate all the powers of imagination to store the fancy with those sublime and alarming images, which true poetry best delights to display.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. II, pp. 323 f.

1746: Any work where the imagination is much indulged, will perhaps not be relished or regarded. The author therefore of these pieces is in some pain lest certain austere critics should think them too fanciful and descriptive. But as he is convinced that the fashion of moralizing in verse has been carried too far, and as he looks upon invention and imagination to be the chief faculties of a poet, so he will be happy if the following odes may be looked upon as an attempt to bring back poetry into its right channel.

Joseph Warton, Advertisement prefacing his *Odes on Various Subjects*.

1703: If we survey the ten pastorals in a general view, it will be found that Virgil can derive from them very little claim to the praise of an inventor. . . . Yet though I would willingly pay to Theocritus the honor which is always due to an original author, I am far from intending to depreciate Virgil.

*The Adventurer*, No. 92.

1690: Nay, it is possible men may lose rather than gain by them [the ancients], may lessen the force and growth of their own genius by constraining and forming it upon that of others, may have less knowledge of their own for contenting themselves with that of those before them. Besides, who can tell whether learning may not even weaken invention in a man that has great advantages from nature and birth, whether the weight and number of so many other men's thoughts and notions may not suppress his own or hinder the motion and agitation of them from which all invention arises; as heaping on wood, or too many sticks, or too close together, suppresses and sometimes quite extinguishes a little spark that would otherwise have grown up to a noble flame.

Sir William Temple, *On Ancient and Modern Learning*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 48.

*Conjectures* (p. 58): What a fall is it from Homer's numbers, free as air, lofty, and harmonious as the spheres, into childish shackles and tinkling sounds!

1754: It is indeed surprising upon the whole that Spenser should execute a poem of uncommon length with so much spirit and ease, laden as he was with so many shackles, and embarrassed with so complicated a bondage of riming.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. I, p. 168.



1690: My Lord Roscommon was more impartial; no man ever rimed truer and evener than he; yet he is so just as to confess that it is but a trifle, and to wish the tyrant dethroned, and blank verse set up in its room. There is a third person, (Mr. Dryden,) the living glory of our English poetry, who has disclaimed the use of it upon the stage, though no man ever employed it there so happily as he. It was the strength of his genius that first brought it into credit in plays, and it is the force of his example that has thrown it out again. In other kinds of writing it continues still, and will do so till some excellent spirit arises that has leisure enough, and resolution, to break the charm, and free us from the troublesome bondage of riming, as Mr. Milton very well calls it and has proved it so well by what he has wrote in another way.

“Preface to the second part of Mr. Waller’s poem, printed in the year 1690.”

1667: The learned languages have certainly a great advantage of us, in not being tied to the slavery of any rime. Dryden, Preface to *Annus Mirabilis*, p. 12.

1667: Thus, you see, your rime is incapable of expressing the greatest thoughts naturally, and the lowest it cannot with grace: for what is more unbecfitting the majesty of verse, than to call a servant, or bid a door be shut, in rime?

Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, p. 93.

*Conjectures* (p. 58): How much nobler, if he [Pope in his translation of Homer] had resisted the temptation of that Gothic demon [rime], which modern poesy tasting, became mortal? O how unlike the deathless, divine harmony of three great names (how justly joined!) of Milton, Greece, and Rome.

1711: To their eternal honor they [Shakespeare, Fletcher, Jonson, and Milton] have withal been the first of Europeans who, since the Gothic model of poetry, attempted to throw off the horrid discord of jingling rime.

Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. I, p. 142.

1711: But so much our British poets are taken up in seeking up that monstrous ornament which we call rime, that it is no wonder if other ornaments and real graces are unthought of and left unattempted. However, since in some parts of poetry (especially in the dramatic) we have been so happy as to triumph over this barbarous taste, it is unaccountable that our poets, who from this privilege ought to undertake some further refinements, should remain still upon the same level as before.

Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. II, pp. 329 f.

1684: Of many faults rime is perhaps the cause;  
Too strict to rime, we slight more useful laws;  
For that in Greece or Rome was never known,  
Till, by barbarian deluges o’erflown,  
Subdu’d, undone, they did at last obey,  
And change their own for their invaders way.

Wentworth Dillon, *An Essay on Translated Verse*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. II, p. 308.

1675: That poetry was in small price . . . is manifest and no great marvel, for even that light of Greek and Latin poets which they had, they much contemned, as appeareth by their rude versifying which of long time was used (a barbarous use it was) wherein they converted the natural property of the sweet Latin verse to be a bald

kind of riming, thinking nothing to be learnedly written in verse which fell not out in rime, that is, in words whereof the middle word of each verse should sound alike with the last, or of two verses, the end of both should fall in the like letters. . . . The truth is, the use of measure alone would give far more ample scope and liberty, both to style and fancy, than can possibly be observed in rime.

Edwards Phillips, *Theatrum Poetarum*.

1668: The measure is English heroic verse rime, . . . rime being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter, . . . the jingling sound of like endings a fault avoided by the learned ancients, both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage riming.

Milton, Preface to *Paradise Lost*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. I, p. 206.

1586: Which rude kind of verse (equal number of syllables and rime) though it rather discrediteth our speech as borrowed from the barbarians, then furnisheth the same with any comely ornament.

William Webbe, *Discourse*, p. 56.

*Conjectures* (p. 59): But supposing Pope's *Iliad* to have been perfect in its kind; yet it is a translation still; which differs as much from an original as the moon from the sun.

1728: Originals only have true life, and differ as much from the best imitations as men from the most animated pictures of them.

Young, Vol. I, p. 418.

*Conjectures* (p. 58 f.): Harmony as well as eloquence is essential to poesy; and a murder of his music is putting half Homer to death. Blank is a term of diminution; what we mean by blank verse, is verse unfallen, uncurst; verse reclaimed, reinthroned in the true language of the gods; who never thundered, nor suffered their Homer to thunder, in rime; and therefore, I beg you, my friend, to crown it with some nobler term; nor let the greatness of the thing lie under the defamation of such a name.

1711: Aristotle observes that the iambic verse in the Greek tongue was the most proper for tragedy; because at the same time that it lifted up the discourse from prose, it was that which approached nearer to it than any other kind of verse. "For (says he), we may observe that men in ordinary discourse very often speak iambs without taking notice of it." We may make the same observations of our English blank verse, which often enters into our common discourse, though we do not attend to it, and is such a due medium between rime and prose, that it seems wonderfully adapted to tragedy.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 39.

1667: First, then, I am of opinion, that rime is unnatural in a play because dialogue there is presented as the effect of sudden thought; for a play is the imitation of nature; and since no man without premeditation speaks in rime, neither ought he to do it on the stage. . . . For this reason, says Aristotle, 'tis best to write tragedy in that

kind of verse which is the least such, or which is nearest prose: and this amongst the ancients was the iambic, and with us is blank verse, as the measure of verse kept exactly without rime.

Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, p. 91.

1665: Another way of the ancients which the French follow, and our stage has now lately practiced, is to write in rime; and this is the dispute betwixt many ingenious persons, whether verse in rime, or verse without the sound, which may be called blank verse (though a hard expression), is to be preferred? But take the question largely, and it is never to be decided, but by right application I suppose it may; for in the general they are both proper, that is, one for a play, the other for a poem or copy of verses,—a blank verse being as much too low for one as rime is unnatural for the other.

Sir Robert Howard, *Pref. to four new Plays*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. II, p. 101.

1602: In those lack-learning times, and in barbarized Italy, began that vulgar and easy kind of poesy which is now in use throughout most parts of Christendom which we abusively call rime and meter, of rithmus and metrum. . . . The facility and popularity of rime creates as many poets, as a hot summer flies. . . . The noble Grecians and Romans, whose skillful monuments outlive barbarism, tied themselves to the strict observation of poetical numbers, so abandoning the childish titillation of riming, that it was imputed a great error to Ovid for setting forth this one riming verse,

Quot caelum stellas, tot habet tua Roma puellas.

Thomas Campion, *Observations*, pp. 4 f.

1586: Rime was tried by the Greek Symias Rhodias, but he was not admitted as an author on account of it. . . . It was later practiced by the Goths and Huns, and by them introduced into Italy.

William Webbe, *Discourse*, p. 57.

1586: Unrime poetry "that commendable kind of writing in true verse."

William Webbe, *A Discourse of English Poetry*, p. 68.

1586: Piers Ploughman was the first that I have seen that observed the quality of our verse without the curiosity of rime.

William Webbe, *A Dissertation on English Poetry*, p. 32.

*Conjectures* (p. 59): Lucian, who was an original, . . . replied, "I am indeed the inventor of new work, the model of which I owe to none."

1756: Pope was a most excellent *improver*, if no great original *inventor*.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 295.

1756: If it should be objected that the barrenness of invention, imputed to Pope from a view of his Pastorals, is equally imputable to the Bucolics of Virgil, it may be answered, that, whatever may be determined of the rest, yet, the first and last Eclogues of Virgil are indisputable proofs of true genius, and power of fancy.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 9.

1754: Gower and Chaucer were justly reputed the first English poets, because they were the first, of any note at least, who introduced *invention* into our poetry.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. II, p. 94.

1754: However, in the reign of Henry VII. this interval of darkness was happily removed by Stephen Hawes, a name generally unknown and not mentioned by any compiler of the lives of English poets. This author was at this period the restorer

of invention, which seems to have suffered a gradual degeneracy from the days of Chaucer. Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. II, p. 96 f.

1735: Mr. Hughes, when he was but nineteen, writ a tragedy entitled Amalassout, Queen of the Goths, which displays a fertile genius, and a masterly invention.

John Hughes, *Poems*, Preface by William Dumcombe.

1712: Adam and Eve, before the fall, are a different species from that of mankind who are descended from them; and none but a poet of the most unbounded invention and the most exquisite judgment could have filled their conversation and behaviour with such beautiful circumstances during their state of innocence.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 279.

1706: 'Tis a new invented kind of fable, very different from anything which had ever been written before, and therefore it may justly be esteemed an original.

John Hughes, in his preface to *Political Touchstone of Trajano Boccalini*.

1675: If invention be the grand part of a poet, or maker, and verse the least, then certainly the more sublime the argument, the nobler the invention, and by consequence the greater the poet. Edward Phillips, *Theatrum Poetarum*.

*Conjectures* (p. 60): Imitation is inferiority confessed; emulation is superiority contested, or denied; imitation is servile, emulation generous; that fetters, this fires; that may give a name, this a name immortal. This made Athens to succeeding ages the rule of taste, and the standard of perfection. Her men struck fire against each other; and kindled, by conflict, into glories no time shall extinguish.

1728: Emulation is an exalted and glorious passion, . . . Its generous food is praise; its sublime profession, transcendancy; and the life it pants after, immortality. It kindles at all that is illustrious, and, as it were, lights its torch at the sun.

Young, Vol. II, p. 351.

1634: I conversed with some of the moderns as well as with the ancients, kindling my fire at those fires which do still burn out of ashes of ancient authors.

Sir William Alexander, *Anacrisis*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. I, p. 181.

250 ca.: Another way (beyond anything we have mentioned) leads to the sublime. . . . It is the imitation and emulation. And let this, my dear friend, be an aim to which we steadfastly apply ourselves. For many men are carried away by the spirit of others as if inspired. . . . Similarly from the great natures of the men of old there are borne in upon the souls of those who emulate them (as from sacred caves) what we may describe as effluences, so that even those who seem little likely to be possessed are thereby inspired and succumb to the spell of the others' greatness.

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 81.

*Conjectures* (p. 61): True poesy, like true religion, abhors idolatry; and though it honors the memory of the exemplary, and takes them willingly (yet cautiously) as guides in the way to glory; real (though unexampled) excellence is its only aim; nor looks it for any inspiration less than divine.

1684: When, by impulse from heaven, Tyrtæus sung,

In drooping soldiers a new courage sprung.

Wentworth Dillion, *Essay on Translated Verse*, ed. Espinarn, Vol. II, p. 307.

1671: Thou Spirit, who led'st this glorious Eremite  
 Into the desert, his victorious field,  
 Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence,  
 By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,  
 As thou art want, my prompted song.

*Paradise Regained*, I, ll. 8-12.

*Conjectures* (p. 61): Though Pope's noble muse may boast her illustrious descent from Homer, Virgil, Horace, yet is an original author more nobly born. As Tacitus says of Curtius Rufus, an original author is born of himself, is his own progenitor, and will probably propagate a numerous offspring of imitators, to eternize his glory; while mule-like imitators die without issue. Therefore we stand much obliged for his giving us a Homer, yet had he doubled our obligation by giving us—a Pope. Had he a strong imagination and the true sublime? That granted, we might have had two Homers instead of one, if longer had been his life; for I heard the dying swan talk over an epic plan a few weeks before his decease.

1756: Perhaps the *Inferno* of Dante is the next composition to the *Iliad*, in point of originality and sublimity; and with regard to the pathetic, let this tale stand a testimony of his abilities: for my own part, I truly believe it was never carried to a greater height. ✓  
 Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 252 f.

1756: Whatever censures we have here too boldly, perhaps, ventured to deliver on the *professed* poetry of Addison, yet we must candidly own, that in various parts of his prose essays are to be found many strokes of genuine and sublime poetry; many marks of a vigorous and exuberant imagination.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 265.

1756: Pope, it is said, had framed a design of writing an epic poem on a fact recorded in our old annalists, and therefore more engaging to an Englishman; on the Arrival of Brutus, the supposed grandson of Aeneas, in our island, and the settlement of the first foundations of the British monarchy. A full scope might have been given to a vigorous imagination, to embellish a fiction drawn from the bosom of the remotest antiquity. . . . But shall I be pardoned for suspecting, that Pope would not have succeeded in his design; that so *didactic* a genius would have been deficient in that sublime and pathetic, which are the main nerves of the epopee; . . . that Pope's close and constant reasoning had impaired and crushed the faculty of imagination; that the political reflections, in this piece, would, in all probability, have been more numerous than the affecting strokes of nature; . . . in a word, that this composition would have shown more of the philosopher than of the poet. Add to all this that it was to have been written in rime; a circumstance sufficient of itself alone to overwhelm and extinguish all enthusiasm, and produce sudden tautologies and circumlocutions.  
 Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, pp. 275 f.

1756: The sublime and the pathetic are the two chief nerves of all genuine poesy. What is there transcendently sublime or pathetic in Pope? . . . Our English poets may, I think, be disposed in four different classes and degrees. In the first class I would place our only three sublime and pathetic poets: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton.

Joseph Warton, *On the Genius and Writings of Pope*, Dedication.

1730: In life or song how rare the true sublime! Young, Vol. II, p. 30.

1712: Milton's chief talent, and indeed his distinguishing excellence, lies in the sublimity of his thoughts. *Spectator*, No. 279.

1712: Milton's sentiments and ideas were so wonderfully sublime, etc.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 297.

1712: A poet should take as much pains in forming his imagination as a philosopher in cultivating his understanding. He must gain a due relish of the works of nature, and be thoroughly conversant in the various scenery of a country. . . . Such advantages as these help to open a man's thoughts, and to enlarge his imagination, and will therefore have their influence on all kinds of writing, if the author knows how to make right use of them.

*Spectator*, No. 417.

1712: Milton's exuberance of imagination.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 320.

1712: For to have a true relish and form a right judgment of a description, a man should be born with a good imagination. . . . The fancy must be warm to retain the print of those images it hath received from outward objects; and the judgment discerning, to know what expressions are most proper to clothe and adorn them to the best advantage.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 416.

1712: "Set forth in all the wantonness of a luxuriant imagination."

Addison, *Spect.* No. 315.

1709: The most active principle in our mind is the imagination: to it a good poet makes his court perpetually, and by this faculty takes care to gain it first. Our passions and inclinations come over next; and our reason surrenders itself with pleasure in the end.

*The Tatler*, No. 98.

250 ca.: For, as if instinctively, our soul is uplifted by the true sublime; it takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting, as though it had itself produced what it has heard.

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 55.

250 ca.: If you take away the sublime, you will remove as it were the soul from the body, . . . sublimity consists in elevation, while amplification embraces a multitude of details.

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, pp. 75 and 77.

*Conjectures* (p. 61): Moreover, so boundless are the bold excursions of the human mind, that, in the vast void beyond real existence, it can call forth shadowy beings, and unknown worlds, as numerous, as bright, and perhaps as lasting, as the stars; such quite-original beauties we may call paradisaical,

Notos sine semine flores.—*Ovid*.

1754: Ariosto was Spenser's favorite; . . . he was naturally biassed to prefer that plan which would admit the most extensive range for his unlimited imagination.

Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. I, p. 6.

1753: "Whoever ventures," says Horace, "to form a character totally original, let him endeavor to preserve it with uniformity and consistency: but the formation of an original character is a work of great difficulty and hazard." In this arduous and uncommon task, however, Shakespeare has wonderfully succeeded in his *Tempest*: the monster Caliban is the creature of his own imagination, in the formation of which he could derive no assistance from observation or experience.

*The Adventurer*, No. 97.

1742-45: And the vast void beyond.

Young, Vol. I, p. 194.

1742-45: Worlds beyond number, worlds conceal'd by day,  
Behind the proud envious star of noon!

Young, Vol. I, p. 226.

1712: So we may observe that our first parents seldom lose sight of their happy station in anything they speak or do; and, if the reader will give me leave to use the expression, that their thoughts are always paradisaical.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 320.

1712: There is another sort of imaginary beings that we sometimes meet with among the poets, when the author represents any passion, appetite, virtue, or vice, under a visible shape, and makes it a person or an actor in his poem. Of this nature are the descriptions of Hunger and Envy in Ovid, of Fame in Virgil, and of Sin and Death in Milton. We find a whole creation of the like shadowy persons in Spenser, who had an admirable talent in representations of this kind.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 419.

1712: There is a kind of writing wherein the poet quite loses sight of nature, and entertains his reader's imagination with the characters and actions of such persons as have many of them no existence but what he bestows on them; such are fairies, witches, magicians, demons, and departed spirits. This Mr. Dryden calls *the fairy way of writing*, which is, indeed, more difficult than any other that depends on the poet's fancy, because he has no pattern to follow in it, and must work altogether out of his own invention. There is a very odd turn of thought required for this sort of writing, and it is impossible for a poet to succeed in it who has not a particular cast of fancy, and an imagination naturally fruitful and superstitious. . . . We are pleased with surveying the different habits and behaviours of foreign countries, how much more must we be delighted and surprised when we are led, as it were, into a new creation, and see the persons and manners of another species? Men of cold fancies and philosophical dispositions, object to this kind of poetry, that it has not probability enough to affect the imagination. But to this it may be answered that we are sure, in general, there are many intellectual beings in the world besides ourselves, and several species of spirits, who are subject to different laws and economies from those of mankind; when we see, therefore, any of these represented naturally, we cannot look upon the representation as altogether impossible.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 419.

1712: Thus we see how many ways poetry addresses itself to the imagination, as it has not only the whole circle of nature for its province, but makes new worlds of its own, shows us persons who are not to be found in being, and represents even the faculties of the soul, with her several virtues and vices, in a sensible shape and character.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 419.

1712: The supernatural and allegorical persons, which may on some occasions be introduced in it [an opera], though not allowed in tragedy, are amusing to the imagination; and though they are characters formed beyond the bounds of nature and reality,

there is a kind of poetical nature that presides here, and ought to regulate the poet's invention and conduct.

John Hughes, Preface to *Calypso and Telémachus*.

1711: Nor must we omit one consideration which adds to his honor and reputation. Homer and Virgil introduced persons whose characters are commonly known among men, and such as are to be met with either in history, or in ordinary conversation. Milton's characters, most of them, lie out of nature, and were to be formed purely by his own invention. It shows a greater genius in Shakespeare to have drawn his Caliban, than his Hotspur or Julius Caesar: The one was to be supplied out of his own imagination, whereas the other might have been formed upon tradition, history or observation.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 279.

250 ca.: Not even the entire universe suffices for the thought and contemplation within the reach of the human mind, but our imaginations often pass beyond the bounds of space. . . .

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 135.

*Conjectures* (p. 62): Since a marvelous light, unenjoyed of old, is poured on us by revelation, with larger prospects extending our understanding, with brighter objects enriching our imagination, with an inestimable prize setting our passions on fire, thus strengthening every power that enables composition to shine.

1758: Les passions sont, en effet, le feu céleste qui vivifie le moral; c'est aux passions que les sciences et les arts doivent leurs découvertes et l'âme son élévation.

Helvétius, *De l'esprit*, p. 364.

1754: If the imagination be lively, the passions will be strong. True genius seldom resides in a cold and phlegmatic constitution.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 102.

1739: 'Tis however certain, that in the warmth of a poetical enthusiasm a poet has a counterfeit belief, and even a kind of vision of his objects. And if there be any shadow of argument to support this belief, nothing contributes more to his full conviction than a blaze of poetical figures and images, which have this effect upon the poet himself, as well as upon his readers.

Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 423.

1712: The author's (Milton's) imagination was so inflamed with this great scene of action that wherever he speaks of it he rises, if possible, above himself.

*Spectator*, No. 333.

1695: 'Tis therefore no wonder that so wise a state as that of Athens should retain the poets on the side of religion and government. . . . The poets were looked on as divine, not only on account of that extraordinary fury and heat of imagination, where-with they are thought to be inspired, but likewise upon . . . their business being to represent vice as the most odious, and virtue as the most desirable thing in the world.

Sir Richard Blackmore, Preface to *Prince Arthur*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, pp. 227 f.

1685: From this sublime and daring genius of his [speaking of Lucretius] it must of necessity come to pass, that his thoughts must be masculine, full of argumentation, and that sufficiently warm. From the same fiery temper proceeds the loftiness of his expressions, and the perpetual torrent of his verse, where the barrenness of his

one of the most  
close by  
himself



subject does not too much constrain the quickness of his fancy.

Dryden, Preface to *Sylvae*, p. 260.

1682. A higher flight, and of a happier force,  
Are odes, the muses most unruly horse,  
That bounds so fierce the rider has no rest,  
But foams at mouth, and speaks like one possessed,  
The poet here must be indeed inspired,  
And not with fancy, but with fury fired.

John Sheffield, *An Essay upon Poetry*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. II, p. 289.

1598: For that fine madness still he did retain,  
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.

Michael Drayton, *Epistle to Reynolds*, ed. Spingarn, p. 137.

1590 The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.

Shakespeare, *Midsummer Nights Dream*.

250 ca.: There are, it may be said, five principle sources of elevated language. . . . First and most important is the power of forming great conceptions, as we have elsewhere explained in our remarks on Xenophon. Secondly, there is vehement and inspired passion. These two components of the sublime are for the most part innate. Those which remain are partly the product of art. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 57.

250ca.: I would affirm with confidence that there is no tone so lofty as that of genuine passion, in its right place, when it bursts out in a wild gust of mad enthusiasm and, as it were, fills the speaker's words with frenzy. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 59.

*Conjectures* (p. 62): Tully, Quintillian, and all true critics allow, that virtue assists genius, and that the writer will be more able, when better is the man.

1730: Such writers have we! all but sense they print;

.....  
Reform your lives before you thus aspire.

Young, Vol. II, p. 34.

1730: Would you restore just honors to the pen?

From able writers rise to worthy men.

Young, Vol. II, p. 44.

1729: The character of honest men comprehends the whole. That gives great authority where there is not great ability; and where there is, breathes something divine.

Young, Vol. II, p. 381.

1605: For if men will impartially, and not asquint, look toward the offices and functions of a poet, they will easily conclude to themselves the impossibility of any man's being the good poet without first being a good man.

Ben Jonson, *Dedicatory Epistle to Valpone*, ed. Spingarn, p. 12.

250 ca.: For it is not possible that men with mean and servile ideas and aims prevailing throughout their lives should produce anything that is admirable and worthy of immortality.

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 61.

*Conjectures* (p. 63): It is prudence to read, genius to relish, glory to sur-

pass, ancient authors; and wisdom to try our strength in an attempt in which it would be no great dishonor to fail.

250 ca.: Failure in a great attempt is at least a noble error.

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 49.

250 ca: And it seems to me that there would not have been so fine a bloom of perfection on Plato's philosophical doctrines, and that he would not in many cases have found his way to poetical subject-matter and modes of expression, unless he had with all his heart and mind struggled with Homer for the primacy, entering the lists like a young champion matched against the man whom all admire, and showing perhaps too much love of contention and breaking a lance with him as it were, but deriving some profit from the contest none the less. For, as Hesiod says, "This strife is good for mortals," and in truth that struggle for the crown of glory is noble, and best deserves the victory in which even to be worsted by one's predecessors brings no discredit.

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, p. 81.

*Conjectures* (p. 63): Something new may be expected from Britons particularly; who seem not to be more severed from the rest of mankind by the surrounding sea, than by the current in their veins; and of whom little more appears to be required, in order to give us originals, than a consistency of character, and making their compositions of a piece with their lives.

1754: Much more might this success be reasonably expected in such geniuses as Britain can enumerate; yet no piece of this sort, worthy of applause or notice, has ever yet appeared.

*The Adventurer*, No. 127.

1727: Everything, my lord, our trade, our peace, our liberty, the complexion of our language and of our government, and the disposition of spirit of the Britons, admirably turned by nature for succeeding in poetry, all would conspire to make this nation the rival of the most renowned among the ancients for works of wit and genius.

Leonard Welsted, *The Perfection of the English Language*, p. 15.

1712: Among all the poets of this kind our English are much the best, by what I have yet seen, whether it be that we abound with more stories of this nature, or that the genius of our country is fitter for this sort of poetry. For the English are naturally fanciful, and very often disposed by that gloominess and melancholy of temper, which is so frequent in our nation, to many wild notions and visions, to which others are not so liable.

Addison, *Spect.* No. 419.

1711: I can readily allow to our British genius what was allowed to the Roman heretofore, *Natura sublimis et acer: Nam spirat tragicum satis et feliciter audet.* ("By nature full of elevation and passion; for he has tragic inspiration enough and happy boldness."—Hor., *Epist.* II.)

Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. I, p. 316.

1690: I can say very impartially that I have not observed among any so much true genius as among the English.

Sir William Temple, *Of Poetry*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 105.

1667: And it is a good sign that nature will reveal more of its secrets to the English

than to others, because it has already furnished them with a genius so well proportioned for the receiving and retaining its mysteries.

Thomas Sprat, *Life and Writings of Cowley*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. II, p. 119.

*Conjectures* (p. 64): Consider in those ancients what is it the world admires? Not the fewness of their faults, but the number and brightness of their beauties; and if Shakespeare is their equal (as he doubtless is) in that which in them is admired, then is Shakespeare as great as they; . . . A giant loses nothing of his size though he should chance to trip in his race.

1753: If an apology should be deemed necessary for the freedom here used with our inimitable bard [Milton], let me conclude in the words of Longinus: "Whoever was careful to collect the blemishes of Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and of other celebrated writers of the same rank, would find they bore not the least proportion to the sublimities and excellencies with which their works abound."

*The Adventurer*, No. 101.

1721: I could not but conclude that with all their faults they [his works] were not altogether deprived of that noble fire, which alone can make them pleasing.

Dennis, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 85.

1721: Wherever genius runs through a work, I forgive its faults, and wherever that is wanting, no beauties can touch me.

Dennis, *Letters*, Vol. II, p. 292.

1715-26: Exact disposition, just thought, correct elocution, polished numbers, may have been found in a thousand; but the poetical fire, this *vivida vis animi*, in a very few. Even in a work where all those are imperfect or neglected, this can overpower criticism, and make us admire even while we disapprove. Nay, where this appears, though attended with absurdities, it brightens all the rubbish about it, till we see nothing but its own splendor. This fire is discerned in Virgil, but discerned as through a glass, reflected from Homer. . . . In Milton it glows like a furnace up to an uncommon ardor, by the force of art: in Shakespeare it strikes before we are aware, like an accidental fire from heaven.

Pope, *Homer*, preface.

1713: The truth of it is, there can be no more a perfect work in the world than a perfect man. To say of a celebrated piece that there are faults in it, is in effect to say no more than that the author of it was a man. For this reason I consider every critic that attacks an author in high reputation, as the slave in the Roman triumph, who was to call out to the conqueror, "Remember, sir, that you are a man." I speak this in relation to the following letter, which criticises the works of a great poet whose very faults have more beauty in them than the most elaborate compositions of many more correct writers.

Addison, *Guardian*, No. 110.

1712: I must also observe with Longinus that the production of a great genius, with many lapses and inadvertencies, are infinitely preferable to the works of an inferior kind of author, which are scrupulously exact and conformable to all the rules of correct writing.

Addison, *Spectator*, No. 281.

1712: A true critic ought to dwell rather upon excellencies than imperfections, to discover the concealed beauties of a writer, and communicate to the world such things as are worth their observation.

Addison, *Spectator*, No. 291.

250 ca.: Now as regards the manifestations of the sublime in literature, . . . it is fitting to observe at once that, though writers of this magnitude are far removed from faultlessness, they none the less all rise above what is mortal; that all other qualities prove their possessors to be men, but sublimity raises them near the majesty of God; and that while immunity from errors relieves from censure, it is grandeur that excites admiration. What need to add thereto that each of these supreme authors often redeems all his failures by a single sublime and happy touch, and (most important of all) that if one were to pick out and mass together the blunders of Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and all the rest of the greatest writers, they would be found to be a very small part, nay an infinitesimal fraction, of the triumphs which those heroes achieve on every hand.

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, pp. 135 and 137.

250 ca.: Is it not worth while, on this very point, to raise the general question whether we ought to give the preference, in poems and prose writings, to grandeur with some attendant faults, or to success which is moderate but altogether sound and free from error? Aye, and further, whether a great number of excellences, or excellences higher in quality, would in literature rightly bear away the palm? . . . For my part, I am well aware that lofty genius is far removed from flawlessness; for invariable accuracy incurs the risk of pettiness, and in the sublime, as in great fortunes, there must be something which is overlooked. It may be necessarily the case that low and average natures remain as a rule free from failing and in great safety because they never run a risk or seek to scale the heights, while great endowments prove insecure because of their very greatness. . . . I have myself noted not a few errors on the part of Homer and other writers of the greatest distinction and, the slips they have made afford me anything but pleasure. Still I do not term them wilful errors, but rather oversights of a random and casual kind, due to neglect and introduced with all the heedlessness of genius. Consequently I do not waver in my view that excellences higher in quality, even if not sustained throughout, should always on a comparison be voted the first place, because of their sheer elevation of spirit if for no other reason, . . . Again: does Eratosthenes in the *Erigone* (a little poem which is altogether free from flaw) show himself a greater poet than Archilochus with the rich and disorderly abundance which follows in his train and with that outburst of the divine spirit within him which it is difficult to bring under the rules of law?

Longinus, *On the Sublime*, pp. 127 and 129.

*Conjectures* (p. 64): Who knows if Shakespeare might not have thought less if he had read more? Who knows if he might not have labored under the load of Jonson's learning, as Enceladus under Aetna? His mighty genius, indeed, through the most mountainous oppression would have breathed out some of his inextinguishable fire; yet, possibly, he might not have risen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement and delight.

1754: When all our hopes and fears are confined within this narrow scene, . . . what demi-gods does it make our superiors, who can bestow what we most value! We tremble before them.

Young, Vol. II, p. 475.

1711: Among great geniuses those few draw the admiration of all the world upon them and stand as the prodigies of mankind who by mere strength of natural parts and

without any assistance of art or learning have produced works that were the delight of their own times, and the wonder of posterity. Addison, *Spectator*, No. 160.

*Conjectures* (p. 64): Shakespeare . . . was master of two books, unknown to many of the profoundly read, though books, which the last conflagration alone can destroy; the books of nature and that of man. These he had by heart, and has transcribed many admirable pages of them into his immortal works. These are the fountain-head whence the Castalian streams of *original* composition flow;

1756: *Wit* and *satire* are transitory and perishable, but *nature* and *passion* are eternal. Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 330.

1753: The *natural* is as strong an evidence of true genius as the *sublime*.  
The *Adventurer*, No. 80.

1742-45: Sprinkled with dews from the Castalian font. Young, Vol. I, p. 152.

1667: To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation; he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there.  
Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, pp. 79 f.

*Conjectures* (p. 65): As what comes from the writer's heart reaches ours; so what comes from his head, sets our brains at work, and our hearts at ease.

1754: If the Fairy Queen be destitute of that arrangement and economy which epic severity requires, yet we scarcely regret the loss of these, while their place is so amply supplied by something which more powerfully attracts us: something which engages the affections, the feelings of the heart, rather than the cold approbation of the head.  
Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, Vol. I, p. 23.

*Conjectures* (p. 66): As his celebrated Cato, few tears are shed, but Cato's own; which, indeed, are truly great, but uneffecting, except to the noble few, who love their country better than themselves.

1726: When no distinction, where distinction's due,  
Marks from the many the superior few.  
Dodington, *Young's Works*, Vol. II, p. 77.

1685: . . . The private diversion of those happy few whom he used to charm with his company and honor with his friendship.  
Robert Wolesley, Preface to *Valentinian*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 25.

*Conjectures* (p. 67 f.): That is, where art has taken great pains to labor undramatic matter into dramatic life; which is impossible. However, as it is, like Pygmalion, we cannot but fall in love with it, and wish it was alive. How would a Shakespeare or an Otway have answered our

wishes? They would have outdone Prometheus, and, with their heavenly fire, have given him not only life, but immortality.

1754: His paintings have beauties unborrowed from the pencil; and his statues in his eyes appear, like Pygmalion's, to live; though mere marble in theirs. His all-animating joy within gives graces to art and smiles to nature, invisible to common eyes. Young, Vol. II, p. 460.

1753: The flame of his genius in other parts, though somewhat dimmed by time, is not totally eclipsed. *The Adventurer*, No. 58.

1742-45: I'll try if I can pluck thee from thy rock,  
Prometheus! from this barren ball of earth:  
If reason can unchain thee, thou art free. Young, Vol. I, p. 162.

1742-45: Come, my Prometheus, from thy pointed rock  
Of false ambition, if unclaimed, we'll mount;  
We'll innocently steal celestial fire.  
And kindle our devotion at the stars;  
A theft that shall not chain, but set thee free. Young, Vol. I, p. 200.

1742-45: Speech ventilates our intellectual fire. Young, Vol. I, p. 25.

1685: True genius, like the *anima mundi* which some of the ancients believed will enter into the hardest and driest thing, enrich the most barren soil, and inform the meanest and most uncomely matter; nothing within the vast immensity of nature is so devoid of grace or so remote from sense but will obey the formings of his plastic heat and feel the operations of his vivifying power, which, when it pleases, can enliven the deadest lump, beautify the vilest dirt, and sweeten the most offensive filth; this is a spirit that blows where it lists, and like the philosopher's stone converts into itself whatsoever it touches. Nay, the baser, the emptier, the obscurer, the fouler, and less susceptible of ornament the subject appears to be, the more is the poet's praise who can infuse dignity and breathe beauty upon it, who can hide all the natural deformities in the fashion of his dress, supply all the wants with his own plenty, and by a poetical daemonianism possess it with the spirit of good sense and gracefulness, or who, as Horace says of Homer, can fetch light out of smoke, roses out of dunghills, and give a kind of life to the inanimate, by the force of that divine and supernatural virtue which, if we will believe Ovid, is the gift of all who are truly poets:

Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo,  
Sedibus aetheriis spiritus ille venit.

Robert Wolesley, Preface to *Valentinian*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 16.

*Conjectures* (p. 68): To close our thoughts on Cato: he who sees not much beauty in it, has no taste for poetry; he who sees nothing else, has no taste for the stage. While it justifies censure, it extorts applause. It is much to be admired, but little to be felt.

1756: A stroke of nature is, in my opinion, worth a hundred such thoughts as,  
"When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,  
The post of honor is a private station."

Cato is a fine dialogue on liberty, and the love of one's country; but considered

as a dramatic performance, nay, as a model of a just tragedy, as some have affectually represented it, it must be owned to want *action* and *pathos*; the two hinges, I presume, on which a just tragedy ought necessarily to turn, and without it cannot subsist.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 257.

1685: For as nothing is more disagreeable either in verse or prose than a slovenly looseness of style, so on the other hand too nice a correctness will be apt to deaden the life, and make the piece too stiff.

Robert Wolesley, Preface to *Valentinian*, ed. Spingarn, Vol. III, p. 8.

*Conjectures* (p. 68 f.): Swift is a singular wit, Pope a correct poet, Addison a great author.

1756: Pope owed much to Walsh: it was he who gave him a very important piece of advice in his early youth; for he used to tell our author, that there was one way still left open for him, by which he might excel any of his predecessors, which was, by *correctness*; that though, indeed, we had several great poets, we as yet could boast of none that were perfectly *correct*, and that, therefore, he advised him to make this quality his particular study.

Joseph Warton, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, p. 195.

*Conjectures* (p. 73): A truth which in such *an age of authors* should not be forgotten.

1753: The present age, if we consider chiefly the state of our own country, may be styled with great propriety the Age of Authors; for, perhaps, there never was a time in which men of all degrees of ability, of every kind of education, of every profession and employment, were posting with ardor so general to the press.

*The Adventurer*, No. 115.

## APPENDIX II

### THE "CONJECTURES" COMPARED WITH THEIR PARALLELS IN SUBSEQUENT GERMAN LITERATURE

Under this heading the reader will find many passages from Young's *Conjectures* collated with a number of striking later parallels in German literature. Those German passages whose indebtedness to the *Conjectures* can be definitely established, as well as those which can be proved to have come from other sources, are discussed in Chapter IV. Those, finally, which can not be traced to the *Conjectures* or to other sources are here given. They are arranged in a chronological order after the passages to which they bear resemblance. While the origin of this third category remains a matter of speculation, the following compilation is offered to give at least a convenient survey of the circumstances in question.

*Conjectures* (p. 64): Consider, in those ancients, what is it the world admires? Not the fewness of their faults, but the number and brightness of their beauties; and if Shakespeare is their equal (as he doubtless is) in that which in them is admired, then is Shakespeare as great as they;—a giant loses nothing of his size though he should chance to trip in his race.

1759: Die Güte eines Werkes beruht nicht auf einzelnen Schönheiten; diese einzelnen Schönheiten müssen ein schönes Ganzes ausmachen, oder der Kenner kann sie nicht anders als mit einem zürnenden Miszvergnügen lesen. Nur wenn das Ganze untadelhaft befunden wird, musz der Kunstrichter von einer nachteiligen Zergliederung abstehen und das Werk so, wie der Philosoph die Welt, betrachten.

Lessing, Vol. VIII, p. 39.

1761: Es ist garnicht die Rede, ob ein Meisterstück Fehler habe, sondern wo die Fehler liegen und wie sie angebracht sind. Jeder vernünftige Autor weiss seine Fehler zum voraus, er weiss ihnen aber die rechte Stelle zu geben, wo sie wie der Schatten im Gemälde sich verlieren und abstechen.

Hamann, Vol. III, p. 97.

1768: Dieses Stück ist ohnstreitig eines von unsern beträchtlichsten Schönheiten, die genugsam zeigen, dass die Fehler, mit welchen sie verwebt sind, zu vermeiden im geringsten nicht über die Kräfte des Dichters gewesen wäre, wenn er sich diese Kräfte nur selbst hätte zutrauen wollen.

Lessing, Vol. X, p. 95.

*Coniectures* (p. 48): Must we then, you say, not imitate ancient authors? Imitate them, by all means; but imitate aright. He that imitates the divine Illiad does not imitate Homer, but he that takes the same method which Homer took, for arriving at a capacity of accomplishing a work so great. Tread in his steps to the sole fountain of immortality: drink where he drank, at the true Helicon, that is, at the breast of nature.



1766: Wenn man sagt, der Künstler ahme dem Dichter, oder der Dichter ahme dem Künstler nach, so kann dieses zweierlei bedeuten: entweder der eine macht das Werk des andern zu dem wirklichen Gegenstände seiner Nachahmung, oder sië haben beide einerlei Gegenstände der Nachahmung, und der eine entlehnt von dem andern die Art und Weise, es nachzuahmen. . . . Bei der ersten Nachahmung ist der Dichter Original, bei der andern ist er Kopist. Jene ist ein Teil der allgemeinen Nachahmung welche das Wesen seiner Kunst ausmacht, und er arbeitet als Genie, sein Vorwurf mag ein Werk anderer Künste oder der Natur sein. Diese hingegen setzt ihn gänzlich von seiner Würde herab; anstatt der Dinge selbst ahmt er ihre Nachahmungen nach und gibt uns kalte Erinnerungen von Zügen eines fremden Genies für ursprüngliche Züge seines eigenen.  
 Lessing, Vol. IX, pp. 50 f.

1767: Aber Theokrit kann er nicht sein. Im Geist der Idyllen muss er nicht unser Lehrer, unser Original, und noch weniger unser einziges Original sein! . . . Zuerst würden dadurch blos arme, trockene Nachahmungen erzeugt, anstatt dass aus Theokrit noch neben ihm Originale gebildet werden können, die eine neue und eigentümliche Art der Verschönerung nach dem Geschmack unsrer Zeit haben können, wenn sie Genies sind. Die Natur, der Theokrit näher ist, kann als eine Mutter mit vielen Brüsten noch viele Geister tränken, und wer trinkt nicht lieber us der Quelle, als aus einem Bach?  
 Herder, Vol. I, p. 349.

1767: Aber nachahmen, um den Ton eines Alten zu lernen? Diese Nachahmung ist schon höher und eine Arbeit des Geistes. Wenn man einen Autor mit dem Feuer liest, mit dem er geschrieben hat, so muss er uns so beseelen, dass wir eine Zeitlang gleichsam verzückt in seine Sphäre der Gedanken sind: sein Ton schallt noch in unsern Ohren; wir sehen mit seinen Augen; wir atmen in seiner Denkart wie in unserem Elemente: die Seite der poetischen Empfindung tönt in uns, erweckt von der seinigen, mit ihr zusammen: die Worte formen sich nach der Wendung seines Geistes: wir lesen *usque scribendi sollicitudinem*—und schreiben. Nun lebt noch seine Sprache in uns; sein Rhythmus tönt noch in unserm Ohr: die Reihe seiner Bilder steht vor unserm Auge: wir ahmen in seiner Sprache, in seinem Silbenmass, in seiner Komposition der Gemälde nach, und zeigen uns also als Vituosen. . . . sein Feuer facht unsern Geist an, wir schaffen in seine Bilder neue Züge, und prägen seine Ideen um, wir bilden uns nach seiner Form neue Figuren, ein Ausdruck gelingt uns vor ihm; eine Wendung glänzt hervor; ein Gleichnis malen wir besser aus,—wir werden mehr als Nachahmer, wir werden Nacheiferer.  
 Herder, Vol. I, p. 408.

1767: Wir, die wir die Werke der Alten mit Recht verehren, da wir sie so vortrefflich finden, ahmen vielleicht mehr die Copien der Natur, als die Natur selbst nach. Vielleicht folgen wir nicht sowohl dem idealisch Schönen in unserm Verstande als dem schon vorhandenen in den Werken der Alten.  
 Gellert, Vol. X, p. 68.

1767: Wir können ungerecht gegen die Natur, gegen uns selber werden, wenn wir unsern eigenen Geist verdrängen, um den ihrigen mit ungeschickter Hand an seine Stelle zu setzen. . . . Wir müssen es also nicht genug sein lassen, nur die Alten nachzuahmen. Die Natur war ihre Lehrmeisterin; und so soll sie auch die unsrige sein! Wir müssen es nicht blos den Alten gleich tun wollen und ihnen nur Schritt vor Schritt folgen, wir werden sonst eben deswegen unter ihnen bleiben. Wir haben

mehr zu wagen. Sie zu übertreffen sei unser Ziel, wenn wir es auch nie erreichen; auf diese Art werden wir ihnen wenigstens gleichen. Gellert, Vol. X, pp. 79 f.

1768: Nacheiferer wecke man, nicht Nachahmer. Je besser die Alten erkannt, um so weniger geplündert: desto glücklicher nachgebildet, desto eher erreicht. Und das endlich ist kopierendes Original, wo keine Kopie sichtbar ist, wo man sich an einem Nationalautor zum griechischen Schriftsteller *seiner* Nation und Sprache schafft: wer dies ist, der schreibt *jür seine Literatur*. Herder, Vol. II, p. 162.

1769: *Einen* nachahmen heisst, wie ich glaube, den Gegenstand, das Werk des andern nachmachen; *einem* nachahmen aber, die Art und Weise von dem andern entlehnen, diesen oder einen ähnlichen Gegenstand zu behandeln. Herder, Vol. III, p. 83.

1775: Man wird nicht leugnen können, dass die eifrige Nachahmung der Alten mehrentheils ein Weg zur Trockenheit werden kann, zu welcher die Nachahmung der Natur nicht leicht verleiten wird. Winkelmann, Vol. I, p. 87.

*Conjectures* (p. 49): Too great awe for them [the ancients] lays genius under restraint.

1766: Ich verehere die Alten, aber ich mag meine Empfindungen nicht von ihnen einschränken lassen. Ist der Neuere ein Mann von Genie? Gut! Er hat ein Recht auf meine Ehrerbietung. *Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe*, p. 15.

1767: Es ist wahr, dass uns die Meisterstücke der Alten und die Regeln der Kunst grosse Vorteile bringen; doch wer weiss, ob sie nicht auf gewisse Weise selbst Ursache sind, dass wir den Alten in unsern Gedichten so weit nachstehen; dass wir gezwungener und mühsamer sind als sie? Gellert, Vol. X, p. 68.

*Conjectures* (pp. 51 and 48): The classics are forever our rightful and revered masters in composition,—when a master is wanted.—Let us be as far from neglecting as from copying their admirable compositions.—Let our understandings feed on theirs. They afford the noblest nourishment. But let them nourish, not annihilate, our own. When we read, let our imagination kindle at their charms. When we write, let our judgments shut them out of our thoughts.

1767: Die Alten sind allerdings unsere Lehrmeister in den schönen Wissenschaften. Wir wollen also dankbar sein und von ihnen lernen; . . . ihre Absicht bei ihren Werken erforschen und sie darnach prüfen; ihre Schönheiten bemerken, fühlen, bewundern, auswendig behalten, annehmen. Wir wollen uns durch ihren Geist erhitzen und beleben, und durch ihren Geschmack den unsrigen verbessern. Aber können wir nicht zu dankbar, nicht auf eine ungereimte Art dankbar sein? Ja, wenn wir sie zu knechtisch nachahmen. Gellert, Vol. X, p. 79.

*Conjectures* (p. 53): And since copies surpass not their originals, as streams rise not higher than their spring, rarely so high; hence, while arts mechanic are in perpetual progress, and increase, the liberal are in retrogradation and decay.

1775: . . . das Wasser im Abgang nie höher springt als in seiner Quelle.

Herder, Vol. VIII, p. 316.

1778: . . . denn kein Abflusz springt höher als seine Quelle.

Herder, Vol. VIII, p. 214.

*Conjectures* (p. 49 f.): Learning, destitute of this superior aid, is fond and proud of what has cost it much pains; it is a great lover of rules, and boaster of famed examples. As beauties less perfect, who owe half their charms to cautious art, learning inveighs against natural, unstudied graces and small, harmless indecorums, and sets rigid bounds to that liberty to which genius often owes its supreme glory.

1763: Ebenso muss ein Genie sich herablassen, Regeln zu erschüttern; sonst bleiben sie Wasser; und man muss der erste sein, hereinzusteigen, nachdem das Wasser bewegt wird, wenn man die Wirkung und Kraft der Regeln selbst erleben will.

Hamann, Vol. II, p. 430.

1763: O ihr Herolde allgemeiner Regeln! wie wenig versteht ihr die Kunst, und wie wenig besitzt ihr von dem Genie, das die Muster hervorgebracht hat, auf welchen ihr sie baut, und das sie übertreten kann, so oft es ihm beliebt!

Hamann, Vol. II, p. 431.

1763: Ohne Selbstverleugnung ist kein Werk des Genies möglich, und ohne Verleugnung der besten Anmerkungen, Regeln und Gesetze kein Schuldrama noch Urbild desselben.

Hamann, Vol. II, p. 432.

1766: Aber wahre Genies finden sich notwendig beleidigt, wenn man sie mit korrekten witzigen Köpfen in gleichem Paare gehen lässt, oder sie gar unter die letztern erniedrigt.

*Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe*, p. 176.

1767: Nun urteile man, ob der ganze Corneille seinen Stoff mehr als ein Genie, oder als ein witziger Kopf bearbeitet habe. Es bedarf zu dieser Beurteilung weiter nichts, als die Anwendung eines Satzes, den niemand in Zweifel zieht: das Genie liebt Einfalt, der Witz, Verwicklung.

Lessing, Vol. IX, p. 309.

1767: . . . und ihre Empfindung wird sie auf manchen Handgriff leiten, der ihrer blossen Spekulation wohl unentdeckt geblieben wäre, den noch kein Kritiker zur Regel generalisiert hat, ob er es schon verdiente, und der öfters mehr Wahrheit, mehr Leben in ihr Stück bringen wird, als all die mechanischen Gesetze, mit denen sich kahle Kunstrichter herumschlagen, und deren Beobachtung sie lieber, dem Genie zum Trotze, zur einzigen Quelle der Vollkommenheit eines Dramas machen möchten.

Lessing, Vol. IX, p. 322.

1767: Dem Genie ist es vergönnt, tausend Dinge nicht zu wissen, die jeder Schulknabe weiss; nicht der erworbene Vorrat seines Gedächtnisses, sondern das, was er aus sich selbst, aus seinem eigenen Gefühl hervorzubringen vermag, macht seinen Reichtum aus; . . . er verstösst also, bald aus Sicherheit, bald aus Stolz, bald mit, bald ohne Vorsatz, so oft, so gröblich, dass wir anderen guten Leute uns nicht genug darüber wundern können; . . . alles, was wir besser wissen als er, beweist blos, dass wir fleissiger zur Schule gegangen sind als er; und das halten wir leider für nötig, wenn wir nicht vollkommene Dummköpfe bleiben wollen.

Lessing, Vol. IX, pp. 324 f.

1767: Genug, dass mich dieser Zwitter mehr vergnügt, mehr erbaut, als die gesetzmässigsten Geburten eurer korrekten Racines, oder wie sie sonst heissen.

Lessing, Vol. IX, p. 390.

1768: Und ist dies, so werde die nachahmungslose, feurige Begeisterung des Dithyramben Vorbild: denn bei uns ist leider selbst die schöne Unordnung des Horaz zum abgezikelten Gesetz geworden. Die Einbildungskraft, von einem würdigen, reichen Gegenstände aufgefordert, von Musik und Sprache geleitet: diese poetische Phantasie geht, wenn sie sich einmal nicht rasende Ausschweifungen nüchtern vorsetzt, sie geht so sicher ihren himmlischen Sonnenweg, voll Glanz und Licht und Feuer, dass der kasteiende Fuhrmann nicht immer hinter ihr sein mag. Herder, Vol. II, p. 180.

1774: Haben wir Genie, so können uns die Regeln viel nutzen; aber sie können uns die Anwendung nicht lehren. Diese kommt auf unsere Einsicht, auf unsern Geschmack an. Die Regeln können selbst ein Genie noch immer fehl führen.

Gellert, Vol. VII, p. 118.

1774: Mitten in der Arbeit können die Regeln, die wir zu sehr vor Augen haben, das Genie zurückhalten. Das edle Feuer des Geistes, das zu dieser oder jener Stelle nötig war, verfliegt, indem wir die Regel um Rat fragen. Wir halten den Geist in seiner Kühnheit auf, weil wir unvorsichtig den Zügel rücken. Wir sollten jetzt von unserm Gegenstände allein erfüllt sein, ihn allein denken und empfinden; wir sollten uns vergessen; und seht, die Furcht, einen Fehler zu begehen, die Begierde, der Regel zu folgen, stört uns in der glücklichsten Verwegenheit. Gellert, Vol. VII, p. 146.

1775: Erkennen und empfinden, gesund erkennen und empfinden sollen wir, und das tut der gemeine Mann vielleicht mehr als der Gelehrte, der gesittete Wilde vielleicht mehr als der ungesittete Europäer, der Mensch von Anschauung und Ruhegeschäft vielleicht mehr als das leidenschaftsvolle, halbwahnwitzige Genie. Reiz und Salz gehören zum Leben; aber es muss im Organismus, im Blut, in der Gesundheit liegen, nicht in zwickenden Leidenschaften oder spornenden Idolen: sonst Frisst es statt zu nähren. Herder, Vol. VIII, p. 312.

*Conjectures* (p. 45): Originals are, and ought to be, great favorites, for they are great benefactors; they extend the republic of letters, and add a new province to its dominion. Imitators only give us a sort of duplicates of what we had, possibly much better, before.

1766: Sie (die Deutschen) empfinden nach Regeln. . . . Immerhin mag die Imagination an den berühmtesten, nützlichsten Erfindungen, deren die menschliche Gesellschaft sich rühmen kann, den wichtigsten Anteil nehmen: auf den deutschen Universitäten, wo ihr der Rang in der Klasse der untern Seelenkräfte angewiesen ist, macht sie eine sehr schlechte Figur, und hier gilt keine Erfindung, die nicht durch die kombinatorische Kunst, durch die syllogistische Kunst, durch die Bestimmungskunst hervorgebracht worden; edle Kunst der oberen Seelenvermögen, vor denen der gemeine Menschenverstand, der sich grösstenteils an den *niedrigern* oder *untern* begnügen muss, sich demütig beugt, und an welche sich das Genie, das daher auch an diesen Orten wenig Verehrer findet, nur selten Anspruch machen darf.

*Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe*, p. 16.

*Conjectures* (p. 48): All eminence, and distinction, lies out of the beaten road.

1762: Denn, wer keine Ausnahme macht, kann kein Meisterstück liefern.

Hamann, Vol. II, p. 405.

*Conjectures* (p. 54): Born originals, how comes it to pass that we die copies? That meddling ape imitation, as soon as we come to years of indiscretion (so let me speak) snatches the pen and blots out nature's mark of separation.

1760: Ich habe dir schon bei einer andern Gelegenheit geschrieben, dass Nachahmen und Nachäffen nicht einerlei ist. Hamann, Vol. III, p. 3.

1768: . . . bald andern Nationen nachgeäfft, so dass Nachahmer beinahe zum Beiwort und zur zweiten Silbe unseres Namens geworden. Herder, Vol. II, p. 51.

1772: . . . denn der Mensch ist unter allen Tieren der grösste Pantomim. Hamann, Vol. IV, p. 42.

1775-'90 Kant: . . . das zu sehr modische Nachäffen verrät einen Menschen ohne Grundsätze. Schalpp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 200.

1775-'90: Es besitzt zwar jeder (sagt Kant) etwas Eigentümliches, allein die gegenwärtigen Schulanstalten, wo alles zum Nachahmen genötigt wird, verhindern die Entwicklung des Genies. Schlapp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 165.

*Conjectures* (p. 57): The writer who neglects those two rules above [Know thyself!—Reverence thyself!] will never stand alone; he makes one of a group, and thinks in wretched unanimity with the throng; incumbered with the notions of others, and impoverished by their abundance, he conceives not the least embryo of new thought; opens not the least vista through the gloom of ordinary writers, into the bright walks of rare imagination and singular design, while the true genius is crossing all public roads into fresh untrodden ground.

1760: Kenner werden in jenen weder Genie noch Geschmack vermissen; und in diesen überall den denkenden Kopf spüren, der die alten Wege weiter bahnt, und neue Pfade durch unbekannte Gegenden zeichnet. Lessing, Vol. VIII, p. 276.

1762: Wer Willkür und Phantasie den schönen Künsten entziehen will, stellt ihrer Ehre und ihrem Leben als ein Meuchelmörder nach und versteht keine andere Sprache der Leidenschaften als die der Heuchler. Hamann, Vol. II, p. 402.

1765: . . . Der Mangel an starken und neuen Gedanken, die einen denkenden Geist so angenehm in den Schriften der Engländer beschäftigen.

Lessing, Vol. VIII, p. 281.

1767: Der Inhalt ist von des Dichters eigener Erfindung. Lessing, Vol. IX, p. 260.

1767: . . . das kühne Genie durchstösst das so beschwerliche Zeremoniel: findet und sucht sich Idiotismen; gräbt in die Eingeweide der Sprache, wie in die Bergklüfte, um Gold zu finden. Herder, Vol. I, p. 166.

1767: . . . und wenn zehn feige Kunstrichter zitterten, und Einwürfe machten, und Bollwerke bauten, und Schlingen legten: so fühle ichs doch, dass alle ihre Warnungen zu klein sind, um ein Genie zittern zu machen: grossmütig würde es sie verachten,

und sehr gerne eine Ausnahme machen, wenn seine Ausnahme nur Meisterstück ist.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 474.

1775: Zum Kopieren, [sagt Kant], gehört nur Talent, denn alle diese Stücke können nicht durch Unterweisung erlangt werden. Genies sind selten, d.h. nicht alle Tage wird etwas erfunden. . . . Mittelmässiges Genie ist eine Kontradiktion, dieses ist alsdann nur ein Talent. Genie muss immer etwas Ausserordentliches sein. Genie ist nicht unter dem Zwange der Regel, sondern ein Muster der Regel. Weil aber doch alles, was hervorgebracht wird, regelmässig sein muss, so muss das Genie der Regel gemäss sein; ist es der Regel nicht gemäss, so muss aus ihm selbst eine Regel gemacht werden können, und dann wird es zum Muster.

Schlapp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 128.

*Conjectures* (p. 60): Imitation is inferiority confessed; emulation is superiority contested, or denied; imitation is servile, emulation generous; that fetters, this fires; that may give a name, this, a name immortal. This made Athens to succeeding ages the rule of taste, and the standard of perfection. Her men struck fire against each other, and kindled, by conflict, into glories no time shall extinguish.

1767: Ist man selbst Genie, so kann man durch Proben die Meiste Aufmunterungen geben, und den schlafenden Funken tief aus der Asche herausholen, wo ihn der andere nicht sieht. Man wird auch eher auf die Hindernisse dringen, die das Genie und den Erfindungsgeist aufhalten, weil man sie aus eigener Erfahrung kennt. Und endlich wird man nun den Toren am besten die Originalsucht ausreden können, wenn man mit der grossen Stimme des Beispiels sie zurückscheucht. Herder, Vol. I, p. 256.

1767: Wie würde ich mich freuen, wenn etwa ein Genie, indem es dies läse, erwachte, sich fühlte, seine Schwingen wiegte, um von ihnen den Staub der Systeme abzu schütteln, und alsdenn seinen Flug zur Sonne nähme. Herder, Vol. I, p. 476.

1768: Genies will ich wecken, Leser lehren, nicht Kunstrichtern genügen!  
Herder, Vol. II, p. 280.

1775: Auch hier entdeckt nur Seele die Seele: nur ein Genie kann das andre verstehen, reizen und ahnden. Meistens sind erfahrungsvolle, stille, neidlose Greise, die solch einen Jüngling, verloren in sich selbst, bemerken und ihm das Hoffnungs- und Trostwort zurufen: verehere dich selber! Sie werfen die Glutkohle sorglos neben ihn hin "Er wird werden!" sie fällt aber in Jünglings Seele und zündet und wird ihn noch spät befeuern. Herder, Vol. VIII, p. 327.

1775-'90: Nichts aber schadet dem Genie mehr [sagt Kant] als die Nachahmung, wenn man glaubt, dass man die Ästhetik lernt, man danach zuschneiden dürfe. Dies geschieht leider in den Schulen, und man kann sicher behaupten, dass der Mangel an Genie zu unsern Zeiten blos aus den Schulen herrühre, wo man Kindern Regeln zu Briefen, Chrien, etc., vorschreibt." Schlapp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, 203.

*Conjectures* (p. 51): Of genius there are two species, an earlier and a later; or call them infantine and adult. An adult genius comes out nature's hand as Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth and mature. Shakespeare's genius was of this kind. On the contrary, Swift stumbled

at the threshold, and set out for distinction on feeble knees. His was an infantine genius; a genius which, like other infants, must be nursed and educated, or it will come to nought. Learning is its nurse and tutor.

1766: Nun ist aber die Muse unseres Sängers eine Tochter der Kunst, nicht der schöpferischen Natur.  
Herder, Vol. IV, p. 253.

1766: Der wahre Geschmack ist ein einziger und wird in eben der Bedeutung angeboren, wie das Genie.  
*Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe*, p. 3.

1767: Aber es tritt ein Genie auf, wie Pallas aus dem Gehirn des Jupiters.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 275.

1774: . . . es wird Genie, es wird eine gewisse natürliche Grösse und Lebhaftigkeit der Seele erfordert, die den Menschen zu allen grossen Unternehmungen begeistern muss. Allein, was vermag das beste Genie ohne Unterricht, ohne Kunst, ohne Übung?  
Gellert, Vol. VII, p. 33.

1775: Wie sich auch Geschmack und Genie feiner brechen mögen: so weiss jeder, dass Genie im allgemeinen eine Menge in- oder extensiv strebender Seelenkräfte sei; Geschmack ist Ordnung in dieser Menge, Proportion, und also schöne Qualität jener strebenden Grösse. . . . Genie ist eine Sammlung von Naturkräften: es kommt also auch aus den Händen der Natur und muss vorausgehen, ehe Geschmack werden kann.  
Herder, Vol. V, p. 600 f.

*Conjectures* (p. 50 f.): Sacer nobis inest deus, says Seneca. With regard to the moral world, conscience, with regard to the intellectual, genius, is that god within. Genius can set us right in composition without the rules of the learned; as conscience sets us right in life without the laws of the land.

1767: Der wahre Kunstrichter folgert keine Regeln aus seinem Geschmacke, sondern hat seinen Geschmack nach den Regeln gebildet, welche die Natur der Sache erfordert.  
Lessing, Vol. IX, p. 261.

1774: So stelle ich mir die Resultate meiner Untersuchung so gross und nützlich vor, dass ich mir nur den Genius zum Leiter und zur Muse meiner Betrachtungen wünschte, der Genius des menschlichen Geschlechts in allen seinen Zuständen war, und unsichtbar den Faden der Entwicklung seiner Kräfte und Neigungen leitet . . . , noch leitet, und allein ganz übersieht.  
Herder, Vol. V, pp. 589 f.

1775: Das Genie ist ein solcher Funke von Göttlichkeit, dass selbst auf falschem Wege, in üblem Geschmacke, er nur von Kräften des Genies und nicht von Regeln anderswohin gelockt werden will.  
Herder, Vol. V, p. 606.

*Conjectures* (pp. 50 and 61): Pindar, who . . . boasted of his no-learning, calling himself the eagle, for his flight above it. . . . with a more than eagle's eye saw and pointed out blank spaces . . . Genius often then deserves most to be praised when it is most sure to be condemned; that is, when its excellence, from mounting high, to weak eyes is quite out of sight.

1765: Die Einsichten des Verfassers scheinen mir, wie sein Stil, mehr ausgedehnt als tief zu sein. . . . Aber ich habe keinen Adlersblick, keinen Sonnenflug, nichts von dem hohen Geruche des Königs unter den Vögeln in der ganzen Abhandlung wahrgenommen.  
Hamann, Vol. III, p. 339.

1769: Hoch wie des Adlers Sonnenflug.

Herder, Vol. III, p. 324.

*Conjectures* (p. 52): Genius is from heaven, learning from man. . . . Learning is borrowed knowledge; genius is knowledge innate and quite our own.

1763: . . . der poetische Geist, eine Gabe des Himmels; bildet sich aber so wenig, wie dieser, von sich selbst und würde ohne Lehre und Unterricht leer und tot bleiben.  
Winkelmann, Vol. I, pp. 238 f.

1767: Die Fürsicht sendet sie [d. Kunst] mitleidig auf die Erde,  
Zum Besten des Barbaren, damit er menschlich werde;  
Weiht sie, die Lehrerin der Könige zu sein,  
Mit Würde, mit Genie, mit Feuer vom Himmel ein.

Lessing, Vol. IX, p. 207.

1778: Wer das zarte Saitenspiel junger Kinder und Knaben zu behorchen, wer nur in ihrem Gesicht zu lesen weiss: welche Bemerkungen von Genie und Charakter, d. i. einzelner Menschenart wird er machen! Es klingen leise Töne, die gleichsam aus einer andern Welt zu kommen scheinen: hie und da regt sich ein Zug von Nachdenken, Leidenschaft, Empfindung, der eine ganze Welt schlafender Kräfte, einen ganzen lebendigen Menschen weissagt, und es ist, dünkt mich, die platteste Meinung, die je in einen Papierkopf gekommen, dass alle menschlichen Seelen gleich, dass sie alle als platte, leere Tafeln auf die Welt kommen. Keine zwei Sandkörner sind einander gleich, geschweige solche reinen Keime und Abgründe von Kräften, als zwei Menschen-seelen, oder ich hätte von dem Wort Menschenseele gar keinen Gedanken. Auch das Leibnizische Gleichnis von Marmorstücken, in denen der Umriss zur künftigen Bildsäule schon da liegt, dünkt mir noch zu wenig, wenigstens zu tot. Im Kinde ist ein Quell von mancherlei Leben, nur noch mit Duft und Leben bedeckt. Eine Knospe, in der der ganze Baum, die ganze Blume eingehüllt blüht.

Herder, Vol. VIII, pp. 226 f.

*Conjectures* (p. 64): Who knows if Shakespeare might not have thought less if he had read more?—His mighty genius indeed through the most mountainous oppression would have breathed out some of his inextinguishable fire; yet possibly he might not have risen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement and delight.

1765-66: Herolde werden sich immer finden, Genies werden sich immer eine Bahn brechen und siegen.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 120.

1767: . . . und wenn Homer "summa vis, et quasi mensura ingenii humani" ist, so wird der, so ihn noch beurteilen and tadeln kann, ein völliger Übermensch, hervorragend über die Schranken des menschlichen Geistes.  
Herder, Vol. III, p. 202.

1768: Die Charaktere im Ugolino sind alle stark und oft recht mit Shakespearisch wildem Feuer gezeichnet.  
Herder, Vol. IV, p. 312.



*Conjectures* (p. 57): This is the difference between those two luminaries in literature, the well-accomplished scholar and the divinely-inspired enthusiast; the first is as the bright morning star; the second as the rising sun.

1767: Ich setze das Kennzeichen des poetischen Genies in die *Illusion einer höhern Eingebug*. Um diese Illusion hervorzubringen, sage ich, muss der Dichter die beobachteten Gegenstände bildlich denken, und mit Wirkung ausdrücken können, welches zusammen ich unter Nachbildung begreife. *Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe*, p. 225.

1767: Pindars Gang ist der Schritt der begeisterten Einbildungskraft, die, was sie sieht, und wie sie es sieht, singt; aber die Ordnung der philosophischen Methode, oder der Vernunft ist der entgegengesetzte Weg, da man, was man denkt, aus dem, was man sieht, beweiset. Herder, Vol. I, p. 325.

1773: . . . der Messias voll der unmittelbarsten Empfindung und einer Einbildung, die sich oft der Inspiration nähert. Herder, Vol. V, p. 258.

1774: Dichtkunst, sie ist ursprünglich Theologie gewesen, und die edelste, höchste Dichtkunst wird wie die Tonkunst ihrem Wesen nach immer Theologie bleiben. Sängern und Propheten, die erhabensten Dichter des Alten Testaments schöpften Flammen aus heiligem Feuer. Die ältesten ehrwürdigsten Dichter des Heidentums—sangen die Götter und beseligten die Welt. Was die Miltons und Klopstocks, Fenelons und Racine in ihren reinsten Sonnenaugenblicken empfunden, war Religion, war nur Nachhall göttlicher Stimme in der Natur und Schrift! Die erhabenste und zerschmelzendste Beredsamkeit Bossuets und Fenelons, die stärkste Gedankenseele Pascals und die sanfteste Empfindungshelle Fenelons und die treue Herzenssprache Luthers und die einfältige ruhige Würde Spaldings und die engelzarte Vorempfindung des Engels in uns, bei meinem Freunde Lavater und wiederum die dunkle Heburg—höhe Young's im Trompetenklang der Mitternacht—Religion! Religion! ferner Nachhall und Nachklang der Offenbarung!—und o Quelle, was liegen in dir noch für Ströme! Herder, Vol. VII, p. 300.

1775: Ein Mensch aber fühle Wahrheit mit inniger Empfindung; gerade nach Mass dieser Empfindung ist er Genie. . . . Ist sein Gefühl inniger, es wird tiefer Verstand, inniges, vielleicht langsames Gedächtnis, glühende, nicht aufwallende Einbildung, eine Art tief sinnigen Witzes und Scharfsinnes.

Herder, Vol. VIII, p. 322.

*Conjectures* (p. 51): Some are pupils of nature only, nor go farther to school. From such we reap often a double advantage: they not only rival the reputation of the great ancient authors, but also reduce the number of mean ones among the moderns.

1767: Jene, die Alten, welche die Werke der Kunst erst erfanden, gingen mit ihrem Genie auf der Bahn der Natur unbekümmert fort. Sie hatten kein anderes Muster als die Natur und das idealische Schöne, das sich ihrem Verstande darstellte. Dieses drückten sie aus, und wussten von keinen Regeln als von denen, welche der Geschmack dem Künstler vorschreibt und welche ihn insgeheim leiten, ohne ihn ihre Leitung fühlen zu lassen. Gellert, Vol. X, p. 68.

1778: Und wo lebt sie (die Dichtkunst) auf solche Weise mehr und anders, als bei treuen Schülern und Kindern der Natur, in Zuständen der sinnlichen Stärke und Gesundheit, der herzlichen Offenheit, Tätigkeit, Wahrheit. Wo Kunst an die Stelle der Natur tritt, und an die Stelle der Menschheit Gesellschaft; da ist, wie alle lebendige Wahrheit der grossen Schöpfung Gottes, so auch ihre Dolmetscherin und Freundin, Poesie, verbannt oder entstellt und zur Lügnerin, was sie nicht sein kann und nie sein sollte, erniedrigt. Wo alles Zwang, Sitte, Konvention ist, solls sie auch werden; mithin ist ihre beste Ader tot, von ihrem göttlichen Feuer ein Häufchen Asche übrig.  
Herder, Vol. VIII, p. 343.

*Conjectures* (p. 49): Genius is a master-workman, learning is but an instrument; and an instrument, though most valuable, yet not always indispensable.—A genius differs from a good understanding, as a magician from a good architect; that raises his structure by means invisible; this by the skilful use of common tools.

1767: Vielleicht wird er die Nachbildungen der Alten gegen ihr Original und ihre Nebengemälde halten und den grossen Zweck ausführen: ein Odengenie in die magische Werkstatt des Apolls und in den Geist seiner Muster einzuführen.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 466.

1768: Seine Einbildungskraft ist reich, fruchtbar, rhapsodisch und auf eine edle Art unbändig: nicht immer ein Baumeister, der wohlgeordnete Gebäude errichtet; aber eine Zauberin, die an den Boden schlägt, und siehe! plötzlich sind wir mitten unter prächtigen Materialien. Sie rührt sie an, und siehe! diese bewegen sich, heben sich, verbinden sich, ordnen sich: und o Wunder! da entsteht wie von selbst, oder vielmehr durch eine unsichtbare Kraft vor unsern Augen ein Pallast, prächtig, gross, bezaubernd, nur nicht nach der Kunst der Vitruve und Vicenti.  
Herder, Vol. II, p. 291.

1769: Göttliche Poesie! geistige Kunst des Schönen! Königin aller Ideen aus allen Sinnen! ein Sammelplatz aller Zaubereien aller Künste! Herder, Vol. IV, p. 167.

1778: Nun sind der Gaben so viel als Menschen auf der Erde sind, und in allen Menschen ist gewissermassen auch nur eine Gabe, Erkenntnis und Empfindung, d. i. inneres Leben der Apperception und Elasticität der Seele. Wo dies da ist, ist Genie, und mehr Genie, wo es mehr, und weniger, wo es weniger ist. Nur dies innere Leben der Seele gibt der Einbildung, dem Gedächtnis, dem Witz, dem Scharfsinn, und wie man weiter zähle, Ausbreitung, Tiefe, Energie, Wahrheit.  
Herder, Vol. VIII, pp. 222 f.

*Conjectures* (p. 52): In the fairyland of fancy genius may wander wild; there it has a creative power, and may reign arbitrarily over its own empire of chimeras. The wide field of nature also lies open before it, where it may range unconfined, make what discoveries it can, and sport with its infinite objects uncontrolled, as far as visible nature extends, painting them as wantonly as it will.

1762: Natur und Schrift also sind die Materialien des schönen schaffenden, nachahmenden Geistes.  
Hamann, Vol. II, p. 292.

- 1766: . . . allein das wird man auch nicht verkennen, dass eine reiche Einbildungskraft und ein schöpferischer Geist zu Erdichtungen nicht seine grössten Talente gewesen.  
Herder, Vol. IV, p. 239.
- 1767: . . . mit einer neuen, schöpferischen, fruchtbaren und kunstvollen Hand.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 429.
- 1767: . . . die Einkleidung poetisch täuschend und schöpferisch ist.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 438.
- 1767: . . . die Schöpfungskraft seiner Einbildung, die Zauberquelle zu Erdichtungen,  
. . . .  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 475.
- 1768: . . . eine neue Welt voll Materie, Interesse und poetischer Bezauberung.  
Herder, Vol. II, p. 188.
- 1768: Die Amazone ist ein poetisches Geschöpf, ohne Zeit und Ort, . . . eine Tochter der Phantasie voll Leben und Glanz und wildem, beinahe Shakespearischem Feuer!  
Herder, Vol. II, p. 187.
- 1770: Der Geist, der immer um die Eleganz buhlt, schwächt sich und verliert die grosse Schöpferkraft des Genies.  
*Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe*, p. 347.
- 1772: Das Meisterstück des schöpferischen Pinsels.  
Hamann, Vol. IV, p. 30.
- 1773: . . . das schöpferische Genie Shakespeares.  
Herder, Vol. V, p. 247.
- 1773: Shakespeare . . . nahm Geschichte, wie er sie fand, und setzte mit Schöpfergeist das verschiedenartigste Zeug zu einem Wunderganzen zusammen.  
Herder, Vol. V, pp. 218 f.
- 1775: Alles Genie (sagt Kant) hat zum Talent eine schöpferische Imagination; dieses gibt uns allerlei Verbindungen von Ideen, worunter der Verstand wählen kann.  
Schlapp, *Kants Lehre vom Genie*, p. 253.
- Conjectures* (p. 67 f.): However, as it [Addison's *Cato*] is, like Pygmalion, we can not but fall in love with it and wish it were alive. How would a Shakespeare, or an Otway, have answered our wishes? They would have outdone Prometheus, and, with their heavenly fire, have given him not only life, but immortality.
- 1767: . . . statt ein Pygmalion seines Autors zu werden, . . . .  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 249.
- 1767: Weil es aber gefährlich ist, als ein zweiter Prometheus den elektrischen Funken vom Himmel selbst zu holen; weil es schwerer ist, Künstler als ein Sophist über die Kunst zu sein, . . . so ist der Mittelweg die gewöhnliche Strasse.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 256.
- 1768-69: Die Statue mit zusammenstehenden Füßen, anliegenden Händen, geradem, bewegungslosem Leibe, kann auch der unbeseelte Leim sein, aus dem Prometheus noch erst einen Menschen schaffen will.  
Herder, Vol. VIII, p. 100.
- 1769: . . . und so lese ich euch auch, als Maler, als Schilderer; nicht als Dichter, nicht als zweiter Prometheus, nicht als Schöpfer unsterblicher Götter und sterblicher Menschen.  
Herder, Vol. III, p. 103.

1770: Pindar ist ein Beispiel, was aus einer Sache wird, wenn sie ein Dichter behandelt. Das Zeug, das er bearbeitete, war nichts weniger als erhaben. Er aber schuf Gottheiten aus Leim und hauchte sie an mit dem warmen Leben seiner Seele. Ich werde zufrieden sein, wenn dieser Feuergeist nicht ganz aus meiner Übersetzung erloschen ist.  
*Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe*, p. 345.

1772: Was sind die Meisterstücke unserer stolzen Vernunft als Nachahmungen und Entwicklungen ihres Instinkts, das geborgte Feuer aller schönen, freien und geadelten Künste als ein prometheisches Plagium des ursprünglich tierischen Naturlichtes?  
Hamann, Vol. IV, p. 16.

1778: Alles ist ihnen angeboren, eingepflanzt, der Funke untrüglicher Vernunft, ohne einen Prometheus, vom Himmel gestohlen.  
Herder, Vol. VIII, p. 198.

*Conjectures* (p. 61): His mighty mind travelled around the intellectual world, and, with a more than eagle's eye saw and has pointed out blank spaces or dark spots in it on which the human mind never shone. Some of these have been enlightened since; some are benighted still.

1767: Es gibt in dem Reiche der schönen Wissenschaften, wie auf der Erdkugel, unangebaute, auch ganz unentdeckte Gegenden; und kein grosses Genie darf verzagen, dass es nicht Neues werde unternehmen können.  
Gellert, Vol. X, p. 81.

*Conjectures* (p. 62): Since a marvelous light, unenjoyed of old, is poured on us by revelation, with larger prospects extending our understanding, with brighter objects enriching our imagination, with an inestimable prize setting our passions on fire, thus strengthening every power that enables composition to shine.

1762: Leidenschaft allein gibt Abstraktionen sowohl als Hypothesen Hände, Füße, Flügel;—Bildern und Zeichen Geist, Leben und Zunge. . . . Wo sind schnellere Schlüsse? Wo wird der rollende Donner der Beredsamkeit erzeugt, und sein Geselle—der einsilbige Blitz?  
Hamann, Vol. II, p. 87.

1762: Empfängnis und Geburt neuer Ideen und neuer Ausdrücke . . . liegen im fruchtbaren Schosse der Leidenschaften vor unseren Sinnen vergraben.  
Hamann, Vol. II, p. 88.

1766: . . . Munterkeit und Feuer im Denken, . . . ein empfindbares und gefühlvolles Herz.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 53.

1767: Zwar die Regeln selbst waren leicht zu machen; sie lehren nur, was geschehen soll, ohne zu sagen, wie es geschehen soll. Der Ausdruck der Leidenschaften, auf welchen alles dabei ankommt, ist nur einzig das Werk des Genies.  
Lessing, Vol. IX, p. 293.

1767: Was ein Genie bildet, ist vorzüglicher im Theokrit: Leidenschaft und Empfindung; was uns Gessner zeigen kann, ist mehr Kunst und Feinheit: Schilderung und Sprache.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 349.

1767: So lange unsere Scribenten, ohne vom Feuer des Genies getrieben zu werden, ihre Sprache, etc.  
*Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe*, p. 273.

1767: Lukrez ist in meinen Augen nach dem Feuer seiner Bilder einer der ersten Genies unter den Römern.  
Herder, Vol. I, pp. 470 f.

1769: . . . und es ward eine Wundermusik aller Affekte, eine neue Zaubersprache der Empfindung. Hier fand der erste begeisterte Tonkünstler tausendfachen Ausdruck aller Leidenschaften, den die menschliche Zunge in Jahrhunderten hatte hervorbringen, den die menschliche Seele in Jahrhunderten hatte empfinden können.

Herder, Vol. IV, p. 118.

1769: . . . und wie ist die ganze Schilderung mit solchen ausgemalten Nebenzügen überladen—beinahe ein untrügliches Wahrzeichen, dass der Dichter nach der Hand eines anderen bearbeitet, dass er nicht aus dem Feuer seiner Fantasie geschrieben.

Herder, Vol. III, p. 70.

1771-74: Der Mann von Genie empfindet ein begeistertes Feuer, das seine ganze Wirksamkeit rege macht; er entdeckt in sich selbst Gedanken, Bilder der Fantasie und Empfindungen, die andere Menschen in Verwunderung setzen; er selbst bewundert sie nicht, weil er sie ohne mühsames Suchen in sich mehr wahrgenommen als erfunden hat.

Sulzer, Theorie der schönen Künsten, *Genie*.

*Conjectures* (p. 62): Tully, Quintilian, and all true critics allow, that virtue assists genius and that the writer will be more able when better is the man.

1762: Man kann allerdings ein Mensch sein, ohne dass man nötig hat, ein Autor zu werden. Wer aber guten Freunden zumutet, dass sie den Schriftsteller ohne den Menschen denken sollen, ist mehr zu dichterischen als philosophischen Abstraktionen aufgelegt.

Hamann, Vol. II, p. 267.

*Conjectures* (p. 50): Rules, like crutches, are a needful aid to the lame, though an impediment to the strong. A Homer cast them away, and like his Achilles, *Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat*, by native force of mind.

1759: Was ersetzt bei Homer die Unwissenheit der Kunstregeln, die ein Aristoteles nach ihm erdacht, und was bei einem Shakespeare die Unwissenheit oder Übertretung jener kritischen Gesetze? Das Genie, ist die einmütige Antwort.

Hamann, Vol. II, p. 38.

1759: Von diesem Kunststücke werden aber freilich diejenigen nichts wissen wollen, die nur an einem korrekten Racine Geschmack finden und so unglücklich sind, keinen Shakespeare zu kennen.

Lessing, Vol. VIII, p. 145.

1767: Das Genie lacht über all die Grenzscheidungen der Kritik.

Lessing, Vol. IX, p. 210.

1768: Wir haben das auch lange so fest geglaubt, dass bei<sup>7</sup> unseren Dichtern den Franzosen nachahmen ebensoviel gewesen ist, als nach den Regeln der Alten arbeiten. Indess konnte das Vorurteil nicht ewig gegen unser Gefühl bestehen. Dieses war glücklicherweise durch einige englische Stücke aus seinem Schlummer erweckt und wir machten endlich die Erfahrung, dass die Tragödie noch einer ganz andern Wirkung fähig sei, als ihr Corneille und Racine<sup>8</sup> zu erteilen<sup>9</sup> vermochten.

Lessing, Vol. X, p. 215.

1768: Das Genie ist nicht gestorben, aber es wird von Regeln, Mustern, von den Ideen unserer feinen, kunstrichterischen und stittlichen Zeit gefangen gehalten. Ermattet in diesen Banden, in den Armen der Kalypso verweibet, hat es nicht die Nerven seiner Stärke. Lust und Mut hat es verloren, sie anzustrengen, und auch wider Willen der blossen Kunstregeln, im Angesicht aller Censoren von Geschmack . . . ein grosses Selbst zu werden.  
Herder, Vol. II, p. 179.

1768: . . . denn einen ganzen tragischen Plan gleichsam *a priori* zu erfinden und von der Leidenschaft philosophisch zu abstrahieren, ist nicht der ordentliche Weg, den unsere Einbildungskraft nimmt. Vielleicht ist dies die Ursache, warum Regeln kein Genie wecken, noch weit weniger schaffen können; ja warum sogar die grössten Genies zügel- und regellos sind.  
Herder, Vol. II, p. 231.

1769: "Die Regeln, die der Kunstlehrer aus der Iliade aufblättert, für wen sollen sie Regeln sein?" Für keinen! . . . Für kein Genie, das sich Laufbahn eröffnen, Originalflug nehmen kann, und wie die Geistercabalistik weiter lautet. Sie sollen gar nicht Regeln, Beobachtungen sollen sie sein: aufklärende, entwickelnde Philosophie für Philosophen, nicht für Dichterlinge, nicht für selbtherrschende Genies.  
Herder, Vol. IV, p. 19.

1774: Man kann die Regeln wissen; man kann sie durch Fleiss zur Ausübung bringen; und man kann ohne Genie doch nicht weiter als zum Mittelmässigen gelangen.

Gellert, Vol. VII, p. 130.

1774: Unglücklicher Gedanke, der nach Regeln schreibt, der ist ein Poet.

Gellert, Vol. VII, p. 136.

1778: Die besten Gedichte der Griechen sind aus der Zeit, da noch keine Buchstaben, viel weniger geschriebene Regeln waren. Der Dichter sah treu, dachte lange, tug mit sich im Herzen, als sein liebes Kind umher: Nun öffnet er den Mund, nun spricht er Wunder, Wahrheit, schaffende Göttersprüche. Und die Sprache klingt, tönt: alle Musen helfen ihm den Gesang vollenden. So sang Homer.

Herder, Vol. VIII, p. 376.

*Conjectures* (p. 65): As what comes from the writer's heart reaches ours; so what comes from his head sets our brains at work and our hearts at ease. It makes a circle of thoughtful critics, not of distressed patients.

1764-66: Sein Stil . . . ist im Feuer der Einbildungskraft hingeworfen, und eben dasselbe Gefühl, damit der Schriftsteller seine Materie empfand, glüht auch den Leser an.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 80.

1767: Das Feuer der Fantasie, in dem der Verfasser dachte und schrieb, aber nicht hätte lesen sollen, glüht jeden Leser an, der es versteht, ein Buch in eine Person, und tote Buchstaben in Sprache zu verwandeln; alsdann hört man und denkt und fühlt mit dem Autor.  
Herder, Vol. I, p. 222.

1767: Aber wie viel leichter ist es, eine Schnurre zu übersetzen, als eine Empfindung. Das Lächerliche kann der Witzige und Unwitzige nachsagen; aber die Sprache des Herzens kann nur das Herz treffen.  
Lessing, Vol. IX, p. 265.

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